

**District of Columbia Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge
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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).

(A)(1): Demonstrating Past Commitment to Early Learning & Development

The District of Columbia (DC)¹ has a long history of attention and leadership in important aspects of the early learning and development (ELD) system, and there now exists deep commitment from the Mayor and executive leadership to pursue a reform agenda that focuses on all of DC's children arriving at Kindergarten healthy and ready to learn. This vision will be accomplished through the development of a truly comprehensive and coordinated system focused on capacity building and quality assurance that will support the best outcomes for children with high needs.

DC was an early pioneer of Quality Rating Systems (QRS) and universal access to Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K), with free Pre-K currently available to all the District's children. Recently, the District has been in the process of revising its QRS to become a Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), and past developments will be a firm platform upon which to expand participation among early learning and development programs and improve all programs across the District.

In addition, the District has undertaken comprehensive reforms related to serving its children with developmental delays and disabilities, birth through age 5. Over the past several years, the District has revamped its early intervention program services for infants and toddlers, birth through two, supported by Part C of IDEA. These reforms, detailed below, resulted in the District's receipt of an improved annual program determination from the USDE Office of Special Education Programs for the first time in the history of the District. Further, the District overhauled its diagnostic service model for children aged 3-5 served by Part B of IDEA. This overhaul, begun in 2008, has resulted in the District moving from a history of under-identification to exceeding the national average in recent months.

With strong programs and efforts in place across agencies for health, mental health, early learning and development related to supporting children's health and wellness, family engagement and home visiting, the District's next step is to examine these efforts to improve coordination and service delivery to build a more comprehensive and cohesive system.

¹ Please refer to Appendix A1.1 for a glossary of acronyms used throughout the narrative.

DC has established early learning and development standards for children and core knowledge areas for early childhood educators, is building a professional development registry, and has key partners already committed to taking the next step to design and implement a comprehensive and coordinated professional development system in alignment with Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC). DC’s professional development supports already in place, like the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project (TEACH), are proving effective. There is strong support to expand and deepen these and other efforts to ensure a highly trained, fairly compensated workforce.

DC has already piloted an approach to Kindergarten entry assessment that, while not meeting the requirements of RTT-ELC, has laid important groundwork and built support for a statewide Kindergarten entry assessment.

With this solid history of attention to early learning and development, DC is poised to serve as a proof point for the nation that targeted interventions for children, ages birth through five, can result in all students being healthy and Kindergarten-ready, especially DC’s many children with high needs — children living in poverty, children with special needs, children who are English language learners, children who are homeless and children in foster care.

History

Since 1964, with the pilot for the Federal Head Start program hosted at Washington DC’s Anacostia Pre-School Project, DC was introduced to the ELD community and has since become recognized as a leader in the early care and education of young children. Several years later, in 1972, Washington DC Public Schools (DCPS) become one of the first jurisdictions in the country to offer Pre-Kindergarten to four-year-old children.

In 2005, DCPS was awarded a grant by the federal Department of Human Services – Early Care and Education Administration to provide high quality Pre-K programs in community-based settings. The dollars were used to fund the Pre-K Incentive Program which operates 21 high quality Pre-K centers across DC. While Mayor Vincent Gray was Chairman of the DC Council, he spearheaded legislation mandating universal Pre-K for all 3- and 4-year-old children by 2014. As a result, the DC Council unanimously passed the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Amendment Act of 2008. In support of this Act the District Council committed \$8.9 million

dollars to serve the approximately 2,000 three- and four-year-olds in the city that did not have access to programming. At the time, it was expected that the creation of 2,000 additional Pre-K slots would take five years to achieve. Through strong District-wide support, DC achieved full universal, free Pre-K for all children in only two years. The law also provides resources and support to improve the quality of Pre-K programs and assist individuals in obtaining the appropriate credentials to serve as teachers and assistant teachers in DC Pre-K classrooms. While the Act included a five year timeline for achieving the goal of universal access, DC reached the milestone of having adequate seats for all three and four year olds by 2011. The District's history has shown success in solving the Pre-K access problem. Now DC must capitalize on innovative District programs and focus efforts on aligning systems to improve service delivery and improving quality of ELD programming.

In an effort to ensure the implementation of quality ELDPs, DC was one of the first states to launch a QRS in 2000. "Going for the Gold" provides DC with a systematic approach to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs. Participating programs receive a rating based on a set of defined program standards which serves as the basis for determining subsidy reimbursement.

Today, DC continues to make a significant investment in ensuring quality ELDPs for its children. Given the needs of the children and families in the District, such investments are essential.

According to Defeat Poverty DC, within the District, two out of five poor adults are single with children. In order to participate in training programs and maintain steady employment, low-income parents need safe, affordable, reliable and high quality child care. However, market-rate child care in the District is extremely expensive with average annual child care costs ranging from \$8,750 for a Pre-K child to \$12,000 a year for an infant. Across DC, many families also face a shortage of child care providers for infants and toddlers, as well as for children with special needs. The shortage of quality infant and toddler care is particularly severe in DC's low-income communities – specifically those within Wards 5, 7, and 8. Combined, these three Wards, or geographic areas, are home to just over 50% of the District's total child population (using 2010 population data for children ages 0-18).

DC's Unique Characteristics that position the State for RTT-ELC Success

As a city-state in the nation's capital, DC is unique from all other RTT-ELC applicants. Its size, governance and reform structures enable reform at the state level that is able to reach individual programs, classrooms and children efficiently and effectively. DC's Theory of Action and unprecedented momentum of recent reforms position the State as a high influence site for RTT investment. The simple truth is this: in DC, Race to the Top funds will go "further, faster" than in any other state, enabling the District to make dramatic change for as many young lives as possible. DC serves as an incubator for innovative education reform and offers both the experience and political will to demonstrate the feasibility of achieving exceptional outcomes backed by a strong reform agenda and aligned leadership and support. The list of factors that position DC for success is long indeed, including a strong state advisory council, mayoral control of the education system, improved state-level capacity, a supportive network of leading local and national partners, and District-wide urgency around the work that remains to be done.

State Advisory Council. DC has a long history of active early learning state advisory councils, with the first, the Mayor's Advisory Council on Early Development (MACED) established in 1980. The MACED was re-established via a Mayor's Order in 1988 and operated until former Mayor Adrian Fenty established the Early Childhood Advisory Council in 2010. After the election of Mayor Vincent Gray, new members were appointed to the advisory body and the group was re-named the State Early Childhood Development Coordinating Council (SECDCC). The responsibility of the SECDCC, which began its work in July 2011, is to improve collaboration and coordination among entities carrying out federally funded and District-funded Pre-K and other early childhood programs to improve school readiness, assist in the planning and development of a comprehensive early childhood education system serving children ages birth to 8 years of age, and assist with compliance with the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act, approved on December 12, 2007. Members of the SECDCC include a cross section of public officials, community leaders, CBO, DCPS and DCPCS leaders and educators, and non-profit, business, and philanthropic leaders. The SECDCC will provide leadership to the ELD reform effort, making recommendations to the Mayor for coordinated implementation.

Mayoral Leadership. DC is only one of just over a dozen US cities in which the education sector is managed under the auspices of the Mayor. Since 2007, mayoral control has played a critical role in eliminating fragmented authority for education of the District’s children across multiple entities and accelerating much needed reform efforts. Ultimately, mayoral control has been critical to DCPS’s recent progress because it ensures the political will and top-level accountability necessary to make the difficult decisions required to promote bold education reform. In his recent State of the District Address, Mayor Vincent Gray announced his intention to “develop the most robust early childhood learning system in the nation.” Indeed, one of Mayor Gray’s signature initiatives is early childhood education.

The Office of the DME was established in 2007 pursuant to the Public School Reform Act (D.C. Law 17-9, codified at D.C. Code § 38--191). As described in the Act, the purpose of the Office is to plan, coordinate and supervise all public education and education-related activities under its jurisdiction, including development and support of programs to improve the delivery of educational services and opportunities, from early childhood to the post-secondary education level. The DME also works to ensure alignment of reform efforts and access to all available District government resources to support education improvement. De’Shawn Wright, the Deputy Mayor for Education, will serve as a critical partner to the success of DC’s reform initiatives in ELD.

Another key office within the Mayor’s Cabinet is the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services (DMHHS). The newly established DMHHS will provide general support to all human support services’ agencies, particularly on interagency initiatives, such as improved service delivery and streamlined policy development. Since six of the seven Participating State Agencies fall within the DMHHS reporting cluster, Beatriz Otero, the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, will serve as another key partner in the ELD reform effort for the District.

Improved State-Level Capacity. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) was created in 2007 as the State Educational Agency for the District of Columbia. OSSE was created as a means of strengthening state-level accountability and support for local education reform initiatives. The State Superintendent of Education represents the District before the US Department of Education on behalf of the District of Columbia. The Superintendent reports to Mayor Gray through the Deputy Mayor for Education. OSSE’s Division of Early

Childhood Education is responsible for coordinating early childhood education services for DC children and their families (codified at D.C. Code § 38-2601 et seq.).

A State Board of Education (BOE) – also created in 2007 – approves state academic standards and the State’s accountability framework. The BOE also serves as an advisory body to OSSE on certain state-level education policies (codified at D.C. Code § 38-2651 et seq.). (See Appendix A1.2 for an organizational chart that outlines the relationships between DC’s agencies.)

Supportive Partners. Washington, DC, as the nation’s capital, is a city that attracts significant human capital talent and high-quality partners. Preeminent universities conduct renowned leadership work, upon which the District will capitalize for professional development. Within early learning education reform, DC attracts the nation’s leading education organizations, many of which have long-standing relationships with District agencies.

Moreover, DC leaders are in constant contact with a strong cadre of national education thought leaders across key reform areas, relying on these partners to provide critical feedback on DC’s educational reform efforts in order to ensure that they are constantly refined and strengthened.

Urgency Around Work Still to be Done. DC’s reform vision is grounded in the core belief that all of the District’s children can – and will – enter Kindergarten healthy and ready to learn at levels comparable to or better than their higher income and suburban peers.

Early Learning Landscape

The DC early learning and development community is a complex landscape of full-day programs for birth to 5, in addition to before- and after-care programs.

The following types of Early Learning and Development Programs are currently available to provide full-day services for young children and their families:

1) Community Based Organizations (CBOs) – DC has a variety of CBOs that provide child care services. There are 450 licensed CBO centers in DC, funded through several different funding streams. These CBO programs operate as private pay providers, Child Care Services Subsidy Program (CCDF) funded providers, Head Start providers or as some combination thereof. Please see below for a further description of funding streams for DC programs.

2) District of Columbia Public Schools – DCPS offers Pre-K for 4 year olds in all of its 85 elementary schools, and most of these elementary schools also offer Pre-K for 3 year olds. DCPS Pre-K programs operate on the regular academic calendar for the length of a typical school day, and are free of cost to residents of the District. DC has instituted an innovative Head Start school-wide model in its 68 Title I elementary schools. This blended funding model consists of local dollars and Head Start funding working in concert to extend Head Start services to children in need across all Title I schools. DCPS provides Head Start comprehensive services to families who qualify, such as family support services and assistance in accessing health, dental and nutrition services.

3) DC Public Charter Schools (DCPCS) – DC has 35 public charter LEAs that offer Pre-K on 60 different campuses throughout the city (see Appendix A1.3 for the full list of DCPCSs with Pre-K programs). Each DCPCS LEA operates its own “school district” and is funded via local dollars through student formula funding. All programs are free of cost to residents of the District on a first-come-first-served basis. DCPCSs that are over-subscribed must enroll students via lottery.

4) Family Home Providers – DC has a variety of family home providers that offer child care services. There are 28 licensed family home providers in DC, funded through private pay and Child Care Services Subsidy Program (CCDF) funds.

The following key agencies, which all report to the Deputy Mayor for Education or the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services (DMHHS), also play a significant role in the implementation of early learning and development services across the District:

AGENCY	COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS
Department of Human Services (DHS) <i>Reports to DMHHS</i>	Determines eligibility for TANF, SNAP, Medicaid, CHIP, DC Alliance and Child Care Subsidy; gathers paternity documentation and information for Child Support Enforcement; and administers TANF, SNAP, Homeless Services, teen parent, family support and refugee resettlement programs
Department of Health (DOH) <i>Reports to DMHHS</i>	Provides school-based health programming and Title V (Maternal, Infant, Child Home Visiting) services
Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF) <i>Reports to DMHHS</i>	Serves as DC’s Medicaid agency which administers Medicaid/CHIP for eligible

	children; maintains the HealthCheck Provider Education System on-line training and resources for EPSDT service delivery and documentation on well-child visits and appropriate health/developmental screenings
Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) <i>Reports to DMHHS</i>	Administers Title IV-E and IV-B funds. Services include family stabilization, reunification, foster care, adoption and supportive community-based services for at-risk children and families
Department of Mental Health (DMH) <i>Reports to DMHHS</i>	Provides Healthy Futures (in partnership with DOH), Play in Early Childhood Evaluation System (PIECES) and Primary Project
Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) <i>Reports to DME</i>	Administers all CCDF funds to programs; oversees Title I, IDEA Parts B and C and Pre-K Enhancement grants; maintains data on early childhood programs in all settings; provides Strong Start for early identification and intervention for ages 0 to 3; licenses child development facilities

In spite of the District’s strong commitment to early learning and development and a political structure that allows for centralized coordination of agency activities, the complexity of the existing service continuum has resulted in isolated programs that often do not align effectively. The District recognizes the need to streamline processes, reduce duplicative efforts and clarify information on service availability and accessibility to the public. In response to varying levels of quality across programs and communities, the District also acknowledges the need to improve quality assurance mechanisms and access to exemplary programs.

Financial Investment

Since the launch of its early learning and development programs in 1964, DC has consistently authorized significant financial resources for programs that provide children and their families with services designed to prepare children for Kindergarten with the skills, knowledge and dispositions that they need to be successful. The funding landscape for early learning and development programs in DC is complex. Funding for Early Learning and Development Programs (ELDP) comes from private pay tuition, child care subsidy funds, Head Start, and local

dollars disbursed to schools as part of the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula. ELDPs in the District are funded in the following ways:

1) CBOs and Family Home Providers: Numerous CBOs and Family Home Providers in the District receive a combination of three funding streams – private pay tuition, child care subsidy funds and Head Start dollars. Fourteen CBOs are also recipients of Pre-K Enhancement grants from OSSE and are therefore also considered publicly-funded Pre-K programs. “Private pay” indicates that providers receive funding from the market rate cost of child care charged to the families of children enrolled. Funded through a combination of local dollars and CCDF funds, the Child Care Services Subsidy Program offers financial assistance to qualifying families for the care of children while the caregiver works or attends school/training. This funding is available to child care centers for children birth-age 5 and for children aged 5-13 for before- and after-school care. This funding is also available to Family Home Providers. There are six different Head Start grantees in DC of which five are CBOs. This federal funding stream allows CBOs to offer high quality early childhood education for children, ages 3-5, from low-income families. Finally, seventeen CBOs in DC receive funding through Pre-K Enhancement grants. These grants were created as part of the 2008 Pre-K legislation described above and the 2010 amendment, which expanded the kinds of entities that may be considered CBOs for the purpose of Pre-K assistance grants, and provide funding for CBOs to add high quality classrooms for 3- and/or 4-year olds.

2) DCPS and DCPCS: All DCPS and DCPCS Pre-K programs are funded through the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula. Every student generates funding for its LEA in the same manner and in the same amount, whether the student chooses to attend DCPS or a charter LEA. Funding under the UPSFF is a straightforward process: each student receives a ‘foundation level’ of funding, established by law at \$11,986 for Pre-K3 and \$11,629 for Pre-K4 for FY 2011 (and established annually through legislation to approve the overall budget). Although the foundation level is the same for all students, DC’s comparatively higher level of per-pupil funding reflects the District’s disproportionately high level of high-poverty students. Additional individual student weightings are applied based on grade level, special education level and limited/non-English proficiency, as appropriate. Additional Title I funds flow through OSSE to District LEAs serving children living at the greatest poverty levels, as do funds for children with special needs

through IDEA Part B. In addition, Head Start funding is blended seamlessly with local dollars in DCPS to support Pre-K.

A review of fiscal allocations over the past five years reveals that DC spent over \$250 million in FY 2011 for programs that provide early learning and development for the District’s children and families. Specifically, financial support has been provided through the following program allocations:

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 Start² <i>Includes Head Start State Collaborative Office Funding</i>	\$125,000	\$74,082	\$45,437	\$117,055	\$416,277 <i>(est., includes State Advisory Council Funding – HS ARRA)</i>
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Pre-K Enhancement Grants</i>	\$4,656,888	\$4,656,888	\$5,129,754	\$7,854,973	\$9,260,319
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: DCPCS and DCPS Per Pupil Spending</i>	\$131,209,168	\$135,231,154	\$164,054,187	\$172,633,801	\$196,332,798
State contributions to IDEA Part C	DC does not contribute state funds to IDEA Part C				
State contributions for special education and related services for children with disabilities, ages 3 through Kindergarten entry <i>See note below</i>	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available

² 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
Total State contributions to CCDF³	\$7,268,173	\$7,213,554	\$7,163,404	\$7,190,075	\$7,172,336
State match to CCDF <i>Exceeded/Met/Not Met (if exceeded, indicate amount by which match was exceeded)</i>	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met (est.)
TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs⁴	\$27,461,899	\$27,689,672	\$39,512,497	\$36,947,695	\$36,947,695
Other State contributions <i>Specify: Social Service Block Grant</i>	\$219,784	\$229,251	\$229,251	\$219,784	\$219,784
Total State contributions:	\$170,721,128	\$174,865,350	\$215,905,279	\$224,743,599	\$250,129,425

DC's formula provides funding for special education and related services for children with disabilities based on service level needs, not age.

The District provides state funding to DCPS and DC public charter schools to support students with disabilities between the ages of three and five through additional "Special Education Add-ons". These add-ons are defined in the Uniform Per Student Funding Formula (UPSFF). The Special Education Add-ons fall into three major categories: (1) Special Education Levels 1-4; (2) Special Education Residential Levels 1-4; and (3) Special Education Extended School Year (ESY) Levels 1-4. The four Special Education Levels are delineated based on the number of specialized service hours a student needs as outlined in their Individualized Education Program (IEP), not age or disability category. The four UPSFF special education levels are summarized below.

- Level 1 – is considered to be a student receiving eight hours or less per week of specialized services;*
- Level 2 – is considered to be a student receiving more than eight hours but less than or equal to 16 hours per week of specialized services;*
- Level 3 – is considered to be a student receiving more than 16 hours but less than or equal to 24 hours per week of*

³ Total State contributions to CCDF must include Maintenance of Effort (MOE), State Match, and any State contributions exceeding State MOE or Match.

⁴ Include TANF transfers to CCDF as well as direct TANF spending on Early Learning and Development 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
<p><i>specialized services; and</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Level 4 – is considered to be a student receiving more than 24 hours per week of specialized services, which may include instruction in a self-contained (dedicated) special education school other than a residential placement.</i> <p><i>The four special education Residential and the ESY Levels are linked to the initial Special Education Levels 1-4 and are awarded only when applicable to the public school. The Residential funding is provided to support the room and board costs and after-hours care provided to students with disabilities, who have been placed in a residential setting. The ESY funding is provided to support the costs of offering extended school year services (i.e. summer school services) to students with disabilities, who have this need designated in their IEPs.</i></p> <p><i>Starting in FY 2012, public schools will also receive additional funding for students with disabilities, ages 3 through 21, through the Special Education Capacity and Compliance Fund. These two funding streams are allocated based on a uniform weight times each school’s aggregate count of students with disabilities. The Capacity Fund has been allocated to public schools to support activities required to improve the quality of special education programming available to students and to ensure that all personnel are appropriately and adequately prepared to address the needs of all students with disabilities. The Compliance Fund has been allocated to public schools to support activities required to address identified noncompliance with federal and local laws regarding the provision of special education services to students with disabilities.</i></p>					

As evidenced by the funding provided to support ELDPs over the past five fiscal years, DC has made increases and adjustments in the annual allocations in direct response to the need and participation in services.

Children with High Needs

DC has a substantial population of children living in poverty and has chosen to define Children with High Needs so as to encompass these children along with those who are in foster care, English Language Learners, have Special Needs and those who are homeless.

Economic Disadvantage. Children from low-income families (defined here as families with an income up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level) present unique needs over their peers of higher socio-economic status. Children who are raised in poverty are at a higher risk of being exposed to risk factors that might impair brain development and affect their social and emotional development. These risk factors can include environmental toxins, inadequate nutrition, maternal

depression, parental substance abuse, trauma and abuse, violent crime, divorce, low quality child care and decreased cognitive stimulation (originating in part from exposure to a limited vocabulary as infants) (Espinosa, 2008; Center for Law and Social Policy, 2009; ELL Working Group, 2009).

According to DC Action for Children's Census Brief, since 2000, the number of children in DC under age 5 has increased by 11%. Currently, 31% of the District's children are in this age group. Since the recession began, there has been a recent spike in child poverty, with concentrations of low income families in Wards 7 and 8. Close to half (48%) of all Ward 8 children and 40% of all Ward 7 children live below the federal poverty threshold. The average family income in Ward 3 is nearly six times higher than family income in Ward 8. This is significant to the District as agencies plan to embark on wide-scale reform; clearly, there is a need in the city for targeted geographic interventions to support children in poverty.

Research shows that children of low-income households benefit from high quality early childhood education programs. Furthermore, studies reveal between 9.5 and 14.2 % of children between birth and five years old in this population experience social-emotional problems that negatively impact their functioning, development and school-readiness (Mather & Adams, 2006), so mental health services are also important to DC's plan.

As referenced below in Table (A)(1)-1, a significant number of DC children are identified as members of a low-income family. In fact, 31.2% of the District's children ages birth to five are from low-income families. As a comparison, the national average for children in poverty under age five is 25% (American Community Survey, 2010).

Table (A)(1)-1: Children from Low-Income⁵ 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	2,227	30.2%
Toddlers ages 1 through 2	4,146	
Preschoolers ages 3 to Kindergarten entry	3,874	32.9%
Total number of children, birth to Kindergarten entry, from low-income families	10,247	31.2%

Sources:

2010 American Community Survey (U.S. Census) : estimates of children by age cohort

2010 U.S. Census : estimate of poverty rate

<i>Free and Reduced Meals</i>	<i>DCPCS</i>	<i>DCPS</i>
<i>SY 2010-2011</i>	<i>76%</i>	<i>71%</i>
<i>SY 2009-2010</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>71%</i>
<i>SY 2008-2009</i>	<i>72%</i>	<i>69%</i>
<i>SY 2007-2008</i>	<i>71%</i>	<i>65%</i>

While the data from multiple sources is not easy to reconcile, it all paints a picture in which the percentage of children living in poverty in DC is higher than the national average. Public schools (both DCPS and PCS) have higher percentages of low-income students in attendance, hence the high percent of free and reduced meal eligible children cited above.

Special Populations of Children with High Needs. According to a new report from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 15% of American children have a developmental disability, including autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. The Infants and

⁵ Low-Income is defined as having an income of up to 200% of the Federal poverty rate.

Toddlers with Disabilities Program (Part C) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was created in 1986 to *enhance the development* of infants and toddlers with disabilities, *minimize potential developmental delay*, and *reduce educational costs* to society by minimizing the need for special education services as children with disabilities reach school age (National Center for Children in Poverty, 1999). Accordingly to the National Early Intervention Longitudinal Study (NEILS), the overall outcomes for infants and toddlers participating in Part C programs included: increased motor, social and cognitive functioning; the acquisition of age-appropriate skills; and reduced negative impacts of their disabilities (Huffman, Mehlinger & Kerivan, 2000). Furthermore, NEILS found that 46% of children who received early intervention and who had been at risk of needing special education services did not need special education at Kindergarten age as these children were performing equally in early reading and mathematics as the general population of children in Kindergarten (Brauner & Stephens, 2006).

In addition to early intervention programs offered for children ages birth through three years, Pre-K programs that integrate children with high needs into the classroom have been found to have significant and meaningful results for young children in their preparedness for Kindergarten. Specifically, children with developmental disabilities who are involved in a Pre-K inclusive setting or model experience the following benefits: 1) provided with competent models that allow them to learn new adaptive skills and/or learn when and how to use their existing skills through imitation; 2) provided with competent peers with whom to interact and thereby learn new social and/or communicative skills; 3) provided with realistic life experiences that prepare them to interact in a community setting; and 4) provided with opportunities to develop relationships with their peers (IDEA, 2004).

Outside of children with developmental disabilities, several additional subpopulations of high need participants exist that require additional support in order to benefit from high quality ELD services. In particular, children who are English Language Learners (ELL), homeless or involved in the foster care system present unique cultural, social and economic challenges that must be mitigated in order to ensure success.

ELLs face numerous barriers to accessing services (Hebbeler et. al., 2007). For example, the parents of children who are ELLs are more likely to have lower levels of English proficiency, be less likely to access child care and early education services (i.e., high quality child care and/or

Pre-K programs), and be less likely to be aware of the availability of child care assistance programs or other assistance programs (Hebbler, 2009). In addition, these children typically enter school at varying ages and with little to no knowledge and/or exposure to the English language (Wolery, & Wilbers, 1994).

Young children experiencing homelessness have an increased incidence of developmental delays, health problems and other challenges when compared with their low-income peers in homes. According to the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, over 40% of children living in homeless shelters are under the age of five, and therefore at an age where early childhood education can have a significant positive impact on their development and future academic achievement.

Finally, children in foster care must contend with challenges to healthy development that extend beyond the typical challenges presented to other infants and children. Many children in foster care have been exposed to multiple risk factors including poverty, domestic and/or community violence, and parental substance abuse that may be underlying or contributing factors to child abuse (emotional, physical, sexual) and neglect. Given their increased risk compared to other children whose experiences have not resulted in out-of-home placement, it is critical to note that they may experience delayed developmental performance across multiple domains (physical/motor, social/emotional, cognitive/academic) that are unique from children who have not been maltreated.

Because these children have suffered significant stress during critical periods of early brain development and personality formation, the support available in an early learning and development environment may help repair aspects of damaged social, emotional and cognitive development and/or prevent additional delays.

An examination of recent data documented in Table (A)(1)-2 identifies the prevalence of special populations of children with High Needs in DC.

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...
Have disabilities or developmental delays	1,356*	3.1%*
Are English learners⁶	816	1.9%
Reside on "Indian Lands"	0	0
Are migrant⁷	0	0
Are homeless⁸	1,152	2.6
Are in foster care	418	1.0%

* In the past, the District has experienced a challenge with the identification of children birth through five with developmental delays and disabilities. However, significant gains have been made in screenings, identification and service delivery to this population over the past several years due to the significant special education reform efforts underway, such as Strong Start, Early Stages and Project LAUNCH.

Sources:

For Children with disabilities or developmental delays: 2010 Child Count

For ELLs and Migrant children: Section 2.1.2.3 of the 2009-10 Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR) II.

For homeless children: The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness, Homeless Management

⁶ For purposes of this application, children who are English learners are children birth through Kindergarten entry who have home languages other than English.

⁷ For purposes of this application, children who are migrant are children birth through Kindergarten entry who meet the definition of "migratory child" in section 1309(2) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Pub. L. No. 89-10. 79 Stat 27.20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.

⁸ For purposes of this application, children who are homeless are children birth through Kindergarten entry (5 years), who are "lacking a fixed, regular residence that provides safe housing, and lacking the financial means to acquire such a residence immediately; or who have a primary nighttime residence that is: (i) A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter or transitional housing facility designed to provide temporary living accommodations; or (ii) A public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings" or those who live in a shelter or supportive housing as defined by the District of Columbia, Homeless Services Reform Act of 2005, (DC Official Code§ 4.751.01 (18), (37) and(38).

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.

Information System. Number of children 0-5 served in FY 2010 living in shelter or supportive housing as defined in FN 8.

For children in foster care: The source of the data provided by the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) is an online management report generated from the Agency's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) known as FACES.NET. Demographic data provided in response to your request is captured in management report #PLC156 (data as of 07/31/11) which is a point in time count of all children in foster care.

Denominator for all % calculations is the 2009 US Census population data ages 0-5

Early Learning Program Participation. DC works to engage children with high needs and their families with the various early childhood learning and development programs available to them. The District offers several unique programs that target the various needs of young children and their families and aligns children with services based on their unique needs and experiences. Table (A)(1)-3 illustrates participation of children with high needs in the various early learning and development programs offered across the District.

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 - CBOs <i>Data Source and Year: OSSE, with assumption that all Pre-K children in CBOs are high need</i>	0	0	512	512
State-funded preschool - DCPS	0	0	3,717	3,717

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.

<i>Data Source and Year:</i> 2010 Enrollment Audit * 71% (based on FRL percentage)				
State-funded preschool - DCPCS <i>Data Source and Year:</i> 2010 Enrollment Audit 76% (based on FRL percentage)	0	0	3,303	3,303
Early Head Start and Head Start⁹ <i>Data Source and Year:</i> Center for Law and Social Policy Analysis of Head Start Program Information Report data, 2010	87	293	3,555	3,935
Services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 (DC does not have any “programs” funded using IDEA Part C and Part B; funding follows the child and services are integrated into existing programs) <i>Data Source and Year:</i> 2010 Child Count Data for Parts B and C	64	119	1,173	1,356
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA <i>Data Source and Year:</i> Consolidated State Performance Report submitted to USED, 2009-2010	0	0	7,848	7,848

⁹ 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.

Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program	1,738	4,955	2,380	9,073
<i>Data Source and Year: DHS Database FY 2010</i>				
<i>7498 additional children are served in Out of School Time programs through DCPS, but this includes all school-aged children.</i>				

While the above referenced Table (A)(1)-3 provides a current snapshot of participation of children with high needs in early learning and development programs across the District, Table (A)(1)-5 below reveals a historical perspective on participation rates for this subpopulation of young learners.

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 years¹⁰				
	2007	2008	2009¹¹	2010	2011
State-funded preschool - CBOs <i>Annual October Enrollment Audit</i> <i>*PK legislation had not yet passed in</i>	N/A	398	496	512	Not available yet

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

¹¹ 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.

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	2011
2007					
State-funded preschool - DCPS <i>Annual October Enrollment Audit * annual FRL %</i>	2,595	2,792	3,341	3,717	Not available yet
State-funded preschool - DCPCS <i>Annual October Enrollment Audit * annual FRL %</i>	1,519	2,195	2,706	3,303	Not available yet
Early Head Start and Head Start¹² <i>Center for Law and Social Policy Extracted Head Start Program Information Report data</i>	3,392	3,281	3,245	3,935	Not available yet
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 <i>(annual December 1 count)</i>	838	852	1,014	1,356	Not available yet
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA <i>(total number of children who receive Title I services annually, as reported)</i>	4,510	4,399	6,846	7,848	Not available yet

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	2011
<i>in the Consolidated State Performance Report)</i>					
Programs receiving CCDF funds <i>(average monthly served)</i>	11,829 + <i>DCPS aftercare</i>	11,873 + <i>DCPS aftercare</i>	18,848 <i>including before and after care</i>	16,571 <i>including before and after care</i>	15,512 <i>including before and after care</i>

As evidenced by the statistics, DC has experienced a significant growth in the percentage of children with high needs who participate in early learning and development programs. In 2011, DC had 15,512 high need students enrolled across all programs receiving CCDF funds. A closer review of the data show significant increases in the utilization of the various programs with gains of 43.2% in the number of participants attending State-funded Pre-K offered through DCPS; 61.8% receiving services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, Section 619; 74% increase in participation in programs funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA); and an overwhelming 117.5% increase in the number of participants with high needs in State-funded Pre-K programs offered through DCPCS.

Existing ELD Legislation, Policies and Practices

The District’s commitment to ELD has been reflected in its legislation, policies and practices provided as an overview table below.

Table A1.1. DC ELD Existing Legislation, Policies and Practices

POLICY/PROCESS	DESCRIPTION
<p>QRIS “Going for the Gold”</p> <p>(2000; Currently undergoing enhancement)</p>	<p>Serves all programs accepting CCDF funds. Provides rewards for child care programs that excel, increases the quality of care for DC children and families, brings new providers into the Child Care Services Subsidy Program, increases subsidy slots, increases compensation for providers, and helps parents and caregivers to be more informed about their child care options.</p>
<p>Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Amendment Act of 2008 (Pre-K Act)</p> <p>D.C. Official Code §271.01 <i>et seq</i></p> <p>(2008; Amended 2010)</p>	<p>Gives the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) authority to establish high quality content standards for publicly funded Pre-K programs. The Act requires annual research and reporting with regard to Pre-K capacity, enrollment and quality. The Act also establishes grants for community-based organizations (CBOs) to expand Pre-K capacity, with a goal of Universal Pre-K by 2014 and establishes a Higher Education Incentive grant program for workforce development to improve the quality of Pre-K programs, and assist individuals to obtain the appropriate credentials to serve as teachers and assistant teachers in DC Pre-K classrooms.</p>
<p>Reform of IDEA Part C- DC Early Intervention Program (children with developmental delays and disabilities, birth through 2) (2008)</p>	<p>In 2007, as part of the District’s comprehensive education reform agenda, a decision was made to move the Part C early intervention system to the Division of Special Education within OSSE, the State Education Agency. From 2008 to date, OSSE’s management of the Part C system has resulted in a comprehensive overhaul of the program, including the development of a new data system to accurately track referrals, services and outcomes, the development of a State training model for all service providers, the adoption of research-based screening and assessment tools, and increase in numbers of children served and served timely. This progress is reflected in an improvement in the District’s annual determination level in FFY 2011 for the first time in the history of the District. The Part C program recently launched a new public awareness campaign, “Strong Start”, designed to further expand outreach and service delivery for infants and toddlers with suspected developmental disabilities.</p>
<p>Reform of IDEA Part B 619- DCPS Early Stages</p>	<p>As the geographic Local Education Agency (LEA), DCPS is obligated under IDEA Part B to identify, evaluate, and serve</p>

<p>Diagnostic Center (serves children with disabilities ages 3-5) (2009)</p>	<p>children ages 3-5 with disabilities in the District. DCPS meets this obligation via a diagnostic center (Early Stages) designed specifically for this purpose. In 2009, DCPS brought in new leadership and revamped its center. As a result, from 2009 to present, DCPS has supported the District in moving from under-representation to exceeding the national identification rate for children with disabilities from 3-5.</p>
<p>Child Care Regulations / Licensure Standards 29 D.C. Mun. Regs. § 300 et seq.</p>	<p>All child care facilities operating in the District of Columbia must comply with the established child care requirements. Child care requirements establish the minimum standards for care in DC. Child care licensing requirements that are checked in a program’s compliance history include: 1) Ownership, Organization and Administration; 2) Supervision of children; 3) Condition of equipment and materials; 4) Discipline practices; 5) Child/Staff ratios; 6) Environment indoor and outdoors; 7) Staff qualification and training development; 8) Criminal background checks; and 9) Menus and Food served. In addition, child development facilities are required to comply with sanitation, building and fire codes and lead clearances as required by other District agencies to become licensed. These include a certificate of occupancy, home occupation permit, lead clearance, fire approval, a letter of good standing if incorporated and a certificate of attendance at an OSSE child care orientation within 12 consecutive months. Unless specifically exempted, every Caregiver and Child Development Facility, regardless of the name by which the Facility is designated, must be licensed to operate a child care facility in the DC.</p>
<p>DCPS Head Start School-Wide Model (2010)</p>	<p>The Head Start School-wide Model, combines the best elements of two program models serving 3- and 4-year-old children (Head Start and Pre-K) and blends funding sources (federal and local) to form a coherent system of high quality services and supports for early childhood students.</p>
<p>DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative (DCPNI) (Recipient of 2010 Promise Neighborhood Planning Grant)</p>	<p>The DCPNI includes a comprehensive place-based initiative known as the Early Learning Network (ELN). The ELN will organize provider members, parents and technical support providers to ensure seamless and non-duplicative coverage for pregnant women, infants, toddlers and preschoolers, particularly from the highest risk families like those headed by teen parents in the distressed DCPNI neighborhoods of Kenilworth, Mayfair and Paradise. The network includes a range of providers such as school-based early learning</p>

	<p>programs (i.e., Early Head Start and Head Start programs), family child care homes, and community-based child care centers. By December 2011 it will include all home visiting partners and by 2012, it will begin to include providers located outside the Parkside-Kenilworth footprint (the home of the DCPNI) who also serve children from Parkside-Kenilworth, as well as reach out to support unlicensed providers. Fight for Children, a highly regarded DC non-profit that recognizes, promotes and cultivates quality education for low-income children in DC, is coordinating the ELN.</p>
Strong Start	<p>The DC Early Intervention Program – Strong Start Child Find Program is a system to locate, identify and refer children birth through two years of age, who may have a disability or developmental delay in one or more of the following areas: speech, language, fine and/or gross motor skills, social/emotional skills, vision and hearing. OSSE recently launched a public awareness campaign under the label of Strong Start about the signs of early developmental delay to advise the public about what to do and who to contact for support.</p>
Early Stages	<p>DCPS conducts Child Find for ages 3-5 through a program called Early Stages. DC consolidated all of its Part B child find efforts into two Early Stages Centers to improve access for families and improve efficiency in the system.</p>
Project Launch	<p>Project Launch is conducted by the DOH. Funded through a federal grant from Health and Human Services, the project focuses on Wards 7 and 8, DC’s lowest-income Wards, to provide mental health consultation and support to programs that serve children and families, including CBOs, Head Start and Early Head Start. It also seeks to integrate two home visiting programs, Parents as Teachers and Healthy Start.</p>
TEACH DC Teacher Education and Compensation Helps	<p>The National Black Child Development Institute operates TEACH Scholarships through a national scholarship program that currently operates in 23 states nationwide. The TEACH program focuses on education, scholarship, increased compensation, and retention. TEACH DC provides scholarships for teachers who work in a licensed DC center, family child care home, Head Start, Pre-K, District of Columbia Public Schools or Charter School program. TEACH scholarships are available for CDA credentials and for</p>

	teachers pursuing an AA or BA at 10 DC area colleges and universities.
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Current Status in Key Areas of High-Quality ELD

DC utilizes the national standards of National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as a foundation for ELD programs. Accordingly, the building blocks identified as critical aspects to an effective, high-quality ELDP model are incorporated into all our programs. The ELDPs supported by the District integrate the following components into our continuum of care.

Early Learning and Development Standards. DC has developed a set of Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) that are utilized by all DCPS, DCPCS, QRIS participants and Pre-K Enhancement grant recipients. The standards were developed by OSSE with broad participation by university experts and were officially adopted by the State Board of Education in December 2008. The comprehensive ELDS were designed to enhance education for the District’s youngest learners. DC ELDS were designed to ensure that the essential domains of school readiness have been incorporated into the service model. Accordingly, Table A(1)-6 identifies the current status of the District’s Early Learning and Development Standards.

Table (A)(1)-6 : Current status of the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards			
<i>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.</i>			
Essential Domains of School Readiness	Age Groups		
	Infants	Toddlers	Preschoolers
Language and literacy development	●	●	●
Cognition and general knowledge (including early math and early scientific development)	●	●	●
Approaches toward learning	●	●	●
Physical well-being and motor	●	●	●

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.

development			
Social and emotional development	•	•	•
<i>Source: OSSE</i>			

Comprehensive Assessment System. DC utilizes a variety of methods to measure the quality of early childhood education programs. Although the District does not currently utilize a comprehensive assessment system as defined by the application, multiple evaluation systems are utilized by ELDPs throughout the District, and the use of evaluations is monitored for QRIS participants as part of the program standards. Due to the strong charter school law within DC, which guarantees the autonomy of public charter schools to choose their own curriculum and teaching methods, the District has not to date implemented a statewide comprehensive assessment system as prescriptive as one defined through RTT. DC has decided to focus efforts on the QRIS to ensure that ELDPs are using assessments as part of their quality improvement processes, and will collaborate and communicate with DCPCS to encourage their involvement. Table (A)(1)-7 identifies the current elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System that the District currently administers across the ELDPs supported by public funds.

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 - CBOs	• (Health, Dental, and Behavioral screening)	• (PPVT, EVT)	• (ECERS and ELLCO)	• (CLASS)	• (Assessments embedded in the required curricula)
State-funded preschool - DCPS	•	•	•	•	
State-funded preschool – Public Charter Schools (DCPCS)	All DCPCS are free to select their own assessments. Answers will vary from program to program.				
Early Head Start and Head Start¹³ *In DC, these programs are found in all 3 sectors – CBOs, DCPS, DCPCS	•	•	•	•	
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	<i>DC does not have any "programs" funded using IDEA Part C and Part B; funding follows the child and services are integrated into existing programs</i>				

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 <i>Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.</i>					
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	<i>DC does not have any "programs" funded using IDEA Part C and Part B; funding follows the child and services are integrated into existing programs</i>				
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	<i>Title I funded programs are found in both DCPS and DCPCS. See DCPS and DCPCS rows for additional information.</i>				
Programs receiving CCDF funds			• (ECERS and ELLCO are conducted in a sample of classrooms)	• (CLASS is conducted in a sample of classrooms)	
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>			• (ECERS and ELLCO are conducted in a sample of classrooms)	• (CLASS is conducted in a sample of classrooms)	
State licensing requirements			•	•	
<i>In DC – QRIS and CCDF programs are synonymous. All programs receiving CCDF funds must participate in the QRIS Tiered Reimbursement System. Programs that do not receive CCDF funds do not currently participate in the QRIS, although the District intends to open participation to other EDLPs, as described in Section B.</i>					

Health Promotion Practices. Children are the most vulnerable and dependent members of communities, and their overall well-being is an important measure of the overall health of a society. Health promotion strategies in early learning and development have been found to

provide health benefits to young children, health improvements across the lifespan and economic returns to society in the form of reduced health care costs and increased economic productivity. Furthermore, there is significant evidence to show that mental health promotion strategies have reduced depression, suicide rates and behavioral problems. Interventions targeted toward the family have resulted in less domestic aggression, fewer learning problems with small children, and generally more positive environments in which children can grow and thrive (International Union for Health Promotion and Education, 2000).

DC works diligently to promote healthy lifestyles across ELD and K-12 programs. Through the Early Stages Program and Project Launch, DC encourages positive social and emotional development. Early Stages, part of DC's Early Intervention Program (DC EIP), will roll-out a new training program in fiscal year 2012 for child care centers that will teach them to conduct developmental screenings for children 0-5 as part of the Child Find process to reach children outside of school-based programs. Project LAUNCH, a grant program of the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has also allowed for extensive training of mental health consultants who serve 28 child development centers through several evidence-based projects, such as Incredible Years, Parents as Teachers, Effective Black Parenting, The Ohio Scales and Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, among others. Consultants work with and train early childhood educators in classroom management, individual child behaviors, and program policies about socio-emotional issues and provide general support to help educators monitor socio-emotional development. Additional programs are described in further detail in Section C.

Table (A)(1)-8 identifies the current health promotion practices that the District currently implements across its various ELDPs.

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high quality health promotion practices currently required within the State

Please place an “X” in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high quality health promotion practices are currently required.

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 – CBOs	•	•	•		
State-funded preschool – DCPS	•	•	•		
State-funded preschool – DCPCS	•	•	•		
Early Head Start and Head Start	•	•	•	•	
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	<i>DC does not have any “programs” funded using IDEA Part C and Part B; funding follows the child and services are integrated into existing programs</i>				
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	<i>DC does not have any “programs” funded using IDEA Part C and Part B; funding follows the child and services are integrated into existing programs</i>				
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	<i>Title I funded programs are found in both DCPS and DCPCS. See DCPS and DCPCS rows for additional information.</i>				
Programs receiving	•	• <i>In partnership</i>	•		

CCDF funds		<i>with Pre-K Enhancement</i>			
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements <i>(ALL TIERS)</i>	•	• In partnership with Pre-K Enhancement	•		
State licensing requirements	•		•	•	

Family Engagement. Research tells us that family-program relationships influence young children’s outcomes. Family engagement, as well as teacher perceptions of positive family attitudes and beliefs about preschool, are linked to the development of cognitive and social skills. Not only do strong family-program relations matter for children’s early outcomes, but the benefits continue over time. Engagement in early childhood forms a solid foundation for family involvement as children move through the school system, supporting student achievement every step of the way (Lopez, 2009).

Mary’s Center Healthy Start Healthy Families (HSHF), Healthy Families/Thriving Communities, Beyond Behaviors, HSC Home Care, the Department of Health’s Healthy Start program, the Washington Hospital Center’s (WHC) Healthy Foundations and the WHC’s Teen Alliance for Prepared Parenting make up the landscape of home visitation programs in the District. Combined, these programs serve children from the prenatal stage through age 21 and include services for teen parents, single mothers, at-risk children and their families, children with special needs and ELLs. Other family engagement initiatives are outlined in the table below and in Section C.

Table (A)(1)-9 identifies the current family engagement strategies that the District requires in its publicly funded ELDPs.

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

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.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
<p>State-funded preschool - CBOs</p>	<p><u>Parental Engagement Requirements (in addition to licensing standards for parental engagement)</u></p> <p>Encouraging Parent Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites must provide opportunities for the parents of children to participate in and support the program’s educational mission as active partners in their child’s learning and development. • Documentation of the offered parent activities and of the family participation is required and must be submitted along with a site’s Monthly Report. <p>Parent Information Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-K programs will have areas in each of the classrooms and in the site’s common space designated for posting and sharing information with parents about the program’s plans, upcoming site events, and/or community resources or events. <p>Parent Handbook</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-K programs will have a parent handbook that includes the site’s administrative policies and will be submitted to OSSE upon request. <p>Parent-Teacher Conferences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-K programs will hold at least two (2) individual parent-teacher conferences during the school year between the teacher and parent/guardian for the purpose of discussing the child’s growth and development. • Documentation of these conferences will be kept in each child’s file. <p>Parent Association</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-K programs will organize and support a Parent Association as a means to encourage active involvement of families. • Parent Association meetings are to be held monthly.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting notes and/or minutes should be kept on file and summarized in the program’s Monthly Reports. • Meeting notes and/or minutes should also be posted in Parent Information Areas and copies should be available for parents as requested. <p>Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent representatives from each program must participate in the city-wide PAC or other established parent organizations that focus on the advocacy of children and supporting the continuum of education.
State-funded preschool – DCPS	The Local School Advisory Team is a group of elected and appointed members that exists for every DCPS school. The team (formerly the Local School Restructuring Teams) consists of parents, teachers, non-instructional school staff, a community member, and in some cases students, to advise the principal on matters that promote high expectations and high achievement for all students.
State-funded preschool - DCPCS	No required Family Engagement Strategies; each LEA is permitted to design its own system of working with families; these provisions are included in their charter document.
Early Head Start and Head Start	A section on the Head Start Performance Standards requires the engagement of families in programming in a variety of ways. As part of the Family Services component, programs develop a parent partnership agreement that entails the level of support needed by the families and the level of parent involvement in the program. Parents participate in the required Parent Policy Council as board members (Policy Council activities include recruitment and hiring of program staff, review of center policies and handbooks, approval of program budget, and development and planning of program events); parents serve as Policy Council volunteers and are convened for monthly meetings; parents are part of the lesson/activity planning process for their child; parents are also engaged in the annual self assessment and federal review of the program; and parents are integral in the development of community partnerships and program events.
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	<i>DC does not have any “programs” funded using IDEA Part C and Part B; funding follows the child and services are integrated into existing program.s</i>
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	<i>DC does not have any “programs” funded using IDEA Part C and Part B; funding follows the child and services are integrated into existing program.</i>
Programs funded under Title I of	<i>Title I funded programs are found in both DCPS and DCPCS. See DCPS and DCPCS rows for additional information.</i>

ESEA	
Programs receiving CCDF funds	Programs must meet licensing standards, plus engage in activities related to parental choice, parental access, and consumer education.
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements <i>Specified by tier</i>	<p>All programs must meet licensing standards plus:</p> <p>Bronze – Organize parent bulletin boards, maintain an open door policy, distribute a Parent Handbook, hold at least two (2) parent meetings annually and three (3) parent training sessions.</p> <p>Silver – above plus offer four (4) parent trainings, encourage volunteerism/involvement, document parent resources, include parent surveys and evaluations, and conduct exit interviews.</p> <p>Gold – above plus offer at least six (6) trainings/meetings annually and proof of parent and community involvement in accreditation process</p>
State licensing requirements	<p>29 DCMR§329.6 The parent or guardian of each child enrolled in a facility shall receive a copy of the facility’s discipline policy.</p> <p>29 DCMR §330.1 The Facility shall develop and implement policies and procedures in the following areas:</p> <p>(r) Parents’ and guardians’ participation in and access to the Facility, including opportunities to communicate with teachers concerning their child’s development, and information parents and guardians should share with the Facility regarding their child’s health status;</p> <p>(s) Periodic reporting of the child’s progress to the parent(s) or guardian(s);</p> <p>29 DCMR§333.2 The Center Director shall be responsible for the supervision, program planning and administration of the Child Development Center and its staff, consistent with the written operational policies and philosophy, and shall assume the following responsibilities: (f) Ensuring parent involvement in the program and in the activities of the Center;</p> <p>29 DCMR § 335.1 The duties of each teacher in a Child Development Center shall include the following: Teachers must: (g) Communicate regularly with the parent(s) or guardian(s) of each child in his or her class or group about the development of their children;</p> <p>29 DCMR § 337.1 The duties of each assistant teacher in a Child Development Center shall include the following: Assistant Teacher must: Assist the teacher in regular communication with the parent(s) or guardian(s)</p>

	<p>of each child in his or her class or group about their children’s development;</p> <p>29 DCMR §338.3 Acceptable subject areas for continuing education and training, as required by this section, include the following: (g) Communication and collaboration with parents and families</p>
<p><i>Additional Family Engagement work in other agencies:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>DOH: Healthy Start program</i> - focuses on reaching at-risk pregnant women and providing access to pre-natal care, counseling, education, coaching, and encouragement • <i>DHS: TANF Family Assessment</i> – intake to identify immediate unmet needs and strengths of the whole family for determination of various services and benefits necessary to increase family self-sufficiency and ameliorate barriers to parent employment, including food stamps, medical assistance, physical and mental health services, adult education services, child care subsidy, and early intervention services for children with disabilities. 	

Early Learning and Development Workforce Credentials. Teacher education is a primary predictor of program quality in early childhood education programs. Research from the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) provides compelling evidence on the high correlation between teacher preparation and the value added to children’s development and experiences by high quality programs in such areas as vocabulary, mathematics, print awareness and concepts (December 2005). While experience alone has proven not to be a predictor of effective care-giving, research demonstrates that the education and specialized professional development opportunities of practitioners are critical to sustaining high quality early learning experiences for children (Connors, et.al. 2005). Practitioner formal education and specialized training are among the most critical elements in ensuring positive outcomes for children (Barnett, 2004; Burchinal, et.al., 2002).

DC has responded to research findings and has developed a draft Career Guide and PD Registry that will encourage ECEs to continue their development through ongoing training. Section D outlines the District’s accomplishments in this area. Table (A)(1)-10 provides an overview of the current credentials available within the District.

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials 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	Yes	861	N/A	<i>DC only requires teacher licensure for teachers who wish to teach in DCPS. While early childhood educators in other settings may choose to apply for licensure, there is no requirement to do so.</i>
Early Childhood Special Education	Yes	145	N/A	
Montessori Primary	Yes	11	N/A	
<i>Some individuals may be double-counted if they are dually licensed.</i>				

Within DC, the following postsecondary institutions and professional development providers provide degrees and credentials for early childhood educator (ECE) professionals:

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>
American University	0	Yes**

Catholic University of America	5	Yes
Center for Inspired Teaching*	0	Yes
DC Practitioner Teacher Program*	11	Yes
Gallaudet University	1	Yes
George Washington University	32	Yes
Howard University	3	Yes
Teach for America*	0	
Trinity Washington University	5	Yes
University of the District of Columbia	1	Yes
Urban Teacher Center*	0	Yes
<p><i>*All starred programs are post-baccalaureate teacher preparation only. These are non-degree granting teacher preparation programs.</i></p> <p><i>** The DC Core Knowledge Areas were developed using the NAEYC Professional Development Standards all National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) <u>accredited</u> higher education institutions have to meet.</i></p>		

Kindergarten Entry Assessment. DC recognizes the definition of readiness from the National Education Goals Panel and has used the Goals Panel guidelines as well as the “From Neurons to Neighborhoods” and “Eager to Learn” reports from the National Research Council as a basis for discussions around Kindergarten readiness. According to these foundational documents, all areas of children’s development and learning must be included in definitions of readiness. Readiness is more than basic knowledge of language and math, important as these are. Readiness expectations should include all areas: physical, cognitive, social, and emotional competence as well as positive attitudes toward learning. According to the National Education Goals Panel, the five domains of children’s development and learning that are important to school success include:

physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches toward learning, language development, and cognition and general knowledge (Kagan, Moore, & Bredekamp 1995). The District has developed a pilot Kindergarten Entry Assessment that, while it does not meet the requirements of RTT-ELC, lays important groundwork for the development of a KEA in the District. DC’s plans include the introduction of a developmentally appropriate KEA, in accordance with the National Resource Council’s report on early childhood assessment (See Section E for further details).

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? <i>(Y/N)</i>	N	N	N	N	N
Domain aligned to Early Learning and Development Standards? <i>(Y/N)</i>	N	N	N	N	N
Instrument(s) used? <i>(Specify)</i>	N	N	N	N	N
Evidence of validity and reliability? <i>(Y/N)</i>	N	N	N	N	N
Evidence of validity for English learners? <i>(Y/N)</i>	N	N	N	N	N
Evidence of validity for children with disabilities? <i>(Y/N)</i>	N	N	N	N	N
How broadly administered? <i>(If not administered statewide, include date for reaching statewide)</i>	N	N	N	N	N

<i>administration)</i>					
Results included in Statewide Longitudinal Data System? (Y/N)	N	N	N	N	N

Early Learning and Development Data Systems. DC currently utilizes the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data Warehouse (SLED) as a single repository of student and education-related data needed to improve education planning, management, reporting, instruction and evaluation. To that end, the District has determined that it is more appropriate and effective to continue with the existing work of SLED rather than implement additional initiatives that would likely result in a duplication of services. Table (A)(1)-13 identifies the essential data elements included in the District’s existing data systems. Included data systems are from many different agencies that collect data on young children and their families across the District. Throughout the proposal, activities are suggested that seek to merge and streamline data in order to better service children and their families.

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
Early Childhood Education Information Management System (EIMS)	•		•	•			•
ECE Professional Registry (participation is currently voluntary but there are requirements for		•	•		•		

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

programs participating in the QRIS to provide the requested data for their educators)							
Resource and Referral			•	Some (all callers will be asked to report demographic information)		• (License status, QRIS tier, subsidy program acceptance)	
ProActive (DCPCS)	•		•	•			•
AOIS (DCPCS)						•	
STARS (DCPS)	•	•	•	•			•
People Soft (DCPS)					•		
Child Plus (Head Start)			•	•	•	•	•
FACES.NET (CFSA: Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System)	• This is not the same UCI used within the education data systems			•	•		
ACEDS (DHS: Automated Client Eligibility)	• This is			•			

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

Determination System)	not the same UCI used within the education data systems or within FACES.n et						
ANASIZI (DMH)				•			

The Statewide Longitudinal Educational Data System (SLED) currently integrates with STARS, ProActive, ECE and EIMS. The SLED system receives data feeds from these systems on a routine basis. The data are then stored for analysis and reporting purposes within the warehouse. The SLED system has been designed in such a way that it can accept data from just about any source, so it is possible to set up data sharing with every system listed in the table. As OSSE continues with the planned releases of SLED, those data systems not currently integrated will have workflow created and data shared between them.

(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) Articulating the State's Rationale for Its Early Learning & Development

Reform Agenda & Goals

The District maintains one primary vision for its early learning and development reform agenda:

To ensure that all District children enter Kindergarten healthy and prepared to learn.

As evidenced by (A)(1), DC has a strong history of political will and financial commitment to increasing access to Pre-K for all children. Because of the District's high numbers of students in poverty, children in foster care, individuals with special needs, and English language learners, free, universal Pre-K has recently served as the rallying cry for achieving the vision above. Even with the recent achievement of a Pre-K placement for all children in the District whose families desire such a placement, however, DC is not content to rest. The District and its agencies are firmly committed to redoubling efforts with a renewed focus on preparing healthy, Kindergarten-ready students.

Theory of Action

The DC reform agenda is guided by a theory of action that informs the selection of strategies and activities for implementation as follows:

Adequate investment in and full implementation of quality early care and education programming for children birth to age 5 will result in children entering Kindergarten healthy and ready to learn.

Utilizing the existing structure of ELD as a foundation for growth, DC intends to shift its focus from its concentration on increasing the number of Pre-K slots available to enhancing *quality* in existing programs, not only for Pre-K but with a new emphasis on programs for infants and toddlers. In addition, the rallying cry will shift from universal Pre-K to Kindergarten readiness, and the District will work diligently to ensure that all of the District's children, and especially those in most need, will enter Kindergarten healthy and ready to learn.

Reform Pillars

What will it take to achieve adequate investment in and full implementation of quality early care and education programming for children birth to age 5? The District believes that three essential reform pillars are necessary to support this agenda. These reform pillars support the overarching vision of the District and are the areas around which goals, strategies and activities have been developed:

1. **Mapping & Alignment** – Achieving a vision as ambitious as DC's requires careful alignment of human and fiscal resources as well as carefully targeted use of those resources toward meaningful goals. Alignment to critical action steps and benchmarks is necessary to ensure timely achievement of ELD reform objectives.
2. **Professional Development** – An ELDP is only as good as its early childhood educators. Developing and facilitating standards-based professional development in critical ELD areas (i.e., learning, health, family engagement) will ensure the delivery of high quality services to all children, including those with high needs. Additionally, creating a comprehensive workforce development training system that will monitor professional learning for program personnel and align individuals with appropriate training

opportunities to improve performance and effectiveness is essential to keep the early childhood professional enthusiastic and growing.

3. **Quality Assurance** – Developing a District-wide definition of quality that can apply to programs in all settings is essential to moving programs toward that bar. Implementation of a carefully-designed monitoring, incentive and support system will ensure that all programs are on a path to continuous improvement.

Mapping and Alignment

In order to assess true levels of current investment and avoid duplication of efforts and spending, the District must map ELD work across agencies and utilize the detail to align efforts and dollars accordingly. The DME and the SECDCC will take the lead on the mapping and alignment work in the District, bringing together agencies for internal collaborative work, as well as networking with other states, early childhood experts, national organizations, and institutions of higher organization to propel work. Much of the mapping and alignment work involves careful analysis of systems at work in the District; for example, the interrelationships between State regulation and the Kindergarten entry assessment, health and wellness initiatives or the ECE career guide. It also includes a concerted effort at fiscal analysis and consolidation of funding streams in order to achieve important goals such as providing professional development, incentivizing professionals, and sustaining the work begun under RTT-ELC. A third area of emphasis will be on standards alignment. Standards for DC's QRIS, the early learning and development standards, health and wellness standards, family engagement standards and workforce knowledge and competency standards must be aligned in order for all moving parts to work in concert to support the vision. Finally, technology will be utilized to enhance the ability of various agencies to work together to provide support to children and their families, ensuring that those who need resources the most receive them in a timely and efficient fashion. Through centralized intake and unified case management, a health data sharing mechanism, universal screening and referral for home visitation, DC will better serve children with high needs.

This reform pillar will allow the District to provide a holistic continuum of care for the child and family during the child's first five years of life.

The District's progress toward the mapping and alignment pillar will be measured through the following goals:

- By 2012, adopt ELDS that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). This will include the creation of a document outlining standards entry points for differentiated learning that address the learning needs of English Language Learners, students with Special Needs and specific milestones for three- and four-year olds (Pre-K3 and Pre-K4)

- By 2012, develop a comprehensive ELD website to improve communication of the ELD community with the public
- By 2013, create a 5-year ELD statewide budget
- By 2013, engage in a process of aligning and updating all health standards, guidelines and regulations that impact Early Learning and Development in the District
- By 2013, develop and implement a practical and feasible plan for equitable compensation for all early childhood educators in the District, regardless of setting, funding stream, or age cohort of children served
- By 2014, leverage resources in order to streamline services and reinforce family engagement practices
- By 2014, verify that teacher preparation programs that prepare Early Childhood Educators are based in outcomes that align with the updated Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework
- By 2015, increase the overall percent of children screened before Kindergarten by 13 percentile points

Professional Development

The District believes that investments in human capital are likely to reap the greatest gains in quality for all programs. The second of DC's reform pillars focuses on professional development for early childhood educators. The District's approach to Professional Development (PD) is as complex as the ECE workforce. Providing options to ECEs is one way DC intends to improve its reach, with trainings offered in various formats (online, paper-based, in-person) and in various locations. The most exciting of DC's PD initiatives involve sites themselves engaging with professional colleagues to coach one another and share best practices. Through coach training sessions, established Centers for Excellence that become hubs for professional development in a region, the Family Provider Peer Network, and career counselors and mentors, the District is planning for maximum engagement of ECEs in their own growth and development.

In addition, through a professional Career Guide, online PD Registry, incentives and compensation, as well as increased opportunities for professional advancement, the District

intends to transform the ECE workforce, all in service of the vision of healthy and prepared children.

The District's success in supporting the professional development pillar will be measured through the following goals:

- By 2012, train all instructional staff, statewide, on the revised ELDS and companion Standards Entry Points manual
- By 2012, develop a comprehensive training system to ensure family engagement standards are implemented and maintained
- By 2012, implement an updated, clear and publically available Framework of Early Childhood Workforce Knowledge and Competency for Early Childhood Educators working with children from ages 0-5
- By 2013, implement ELDS that are fully aligned with the CCSS
- By 2013, implement a career guide that is aligned with local and national standards
- By 2014, at least one representative from all licensed providers will complete the family engagement training module
- By 2015, train at least 85% of all instructional staff of licensed providers on health standards and best practices for implementation
- By 2015, all Early Childhood Educators will have a clearly articulated path for advancing in the Career Guide levels in their chosen career track

Quality Assurance

With aligned systems and early childhood educators who are invigorated and growing, quality of early learning and care experiences for children are bound to improve. DC is intent on measuring its progress to amplify what is working and to design interventions to improve areas for growth. Through the quality assurance pillar, DC will expand its QRIS to allow for comparability across settings/sectors which will allow for defined quality for all programs rather than quality solely tied to a funding stream. In addition, the District will assess Kindergarten readiness to understand differences in what children know and are able to do at Kindergarten entry, particularly among

high need subgroups to inform appropriate policy and resource decisions related to ELD programs and early elementary education.

Historically, DC has concentrated on increasing capacity. DC expanded the number of Pre-K slots and has essentially realized the goal of free, universal Pre-K in the state. Today and into the future, the District must focus on the quality of all programming, both in Pre-K and in infant/toddler care. In order to assess the overall quality of programs and monitor the progress of investments in quality improvement, the District is enhancing its current Quality Rating System (QRS). Fully implementing a robust Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) will ensure that the state can assess and systematically improve the quality of participating programs. Expanding participation in the QRIS to all programs in the state will offer the opportunity for the District to raise the quality of all programs and inform families of the state of quality across the District. High-quality programming is essential to ensuring that all children in the District enter school healthy and ready to learn.

In order to measure the progress DC is making with respect to school readiness for all children, the District is implementing a Kindergarten Entry Assessment. The District believes the adage that “what gets measured gets done” and, beginning in 2014, will measure the readiness of all children entering public Kindergarten programs in order to gauge how well the state is doing to prepare DC’s youngest children for success.

Quality assurance efforts will be measured through the following goals:

- By 2013, establish Going for the Gold as a robust, tiered quality rating and improvement system
- After establishing a baseline in 2013, at least five new ELDPs per year will be rated at the Gold level
- By 2014, the QRIS program standards will define high quality EDLP in DC, and Going for the Gold will be used as the common quality metric for ELDPs across all sectors in the District
- By 2014, ELDPs participating in Going for the Gold will receive rigorous monitoring and technical assistance

- By 2014-2015, implement pilot Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) in 50 public and public charter school classrooms
- By 2015, 100% of all ELDPs currently eligible for QRS will participate in the revised QRIS
- By 2015, 50% of public and public charter schools with Pre-K classrooms in the District will participate in the QRIS
- Through a rigorous third-party evaluation, understand the strengths and weaknesses of the QRIS by 2015
- By 2015-2016, implement the KEA in 50% of all public and public charter school Kindergarten classrooms
- By 2016-2017, reach full implementation of KEA in all public and public charter school Kindergarten classrooms

An Implementation Table that outlines all activities related to these three reform pillars and goals, along with parties responsible and timeline, is available in Appendix A2.2.

Rationale for Focused Investment Area Selection

The District has carefully considered the future of early learning and development for the State and has developed a plan based on the existing identified needs across the region as well as the vision for DC’s future. The planning team invested significant time and effort into reviewing and understanding both the current and projected climate in DC and aligned goals accordingly. The selection criteria that have been identified were selected based on the following rationale:

(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high quality Early Learning and Development Standards.
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<p>In 2008, the District worked with national experts to develop and adopt ELDS that aligned with the state’s K-3 standards. Shortly after, in 2010, DC adopted the Common Core State Standards which has created the need for additional work to fully align the ELDS with the CCSS.</p>

<p>Currently, efforts have begun to complete the alignment however, it is the District’s intent to implement an intensive alignment process to accelerate and complete this work.</p>

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

Many agencies and organizations in the District work diligently to meet the health, behavioral and developmental needs of young children, but work is often fragmented and/or duplicative. Similarly, various bodies of health and wellness standards exist and need to be consolidated. By addressing inefficiencies in the system, DC will be able to serve more children and serve them better.

(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.

A system is needed for universal case management within the District to ensure that families' needs are met in the most effective and least intrusive way. As an example, a universal screening and referral process for home visitation for new parents could ensure that services reach the family more quickly and with less administrative cost to the District. In addition, further supports are needed to engage and invest families in their child/ren's learning at an early age. By developing best practices for programs around family engagement, the District seeks to establish an early bond between family and ELDP that will produce lasting academic benefits for children.

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

With the proposed revisions of the ELDS and QRIS, DC Professionals Receiving Opportunities and Support (DC PROS) Professional Development and the newly developed Career Guide must also be brought into alignment. Furthermore, additional efforts to align higher education and professional development provider offerings with the knowledge and skills needed for a highly effective workforce are essential to prepare and develop effective teachers for early learners.

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

Workforce needs in the District loom large, as ECEs strive to earn required degrees by the codified deadline (2017). DC needs to focus efforts on development of alternative pathways that fulfill ECE workforce needs in the District, implementation of a financial incentive program for effective ECEs, development of a corps of career counselors and mentors, and the full build-out

of a professional development registry. Establishing Centers for Excellence and the Family Provider Peer Network will allow the most effective ECEs to share best practices while nurturing their own professionalism.

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

If Kindergarten readiness is DC’s rallying cry, any reform effort would be lacking without a comprehensive assessment of the skills and knowledge that children bring with them to the schoolhouse door. The Kindergarten Entry Assessment will provide information about what the District is doing right, and what targeted improvements are needed to achieve the articulated vision.

Together, these criteria allow the District to raise the three reform pillars of mapping and alignment, professional development and quality assurance in order to lift up the overarching vision of DC’s children arriving at Kindergarten healthy and ready to learn.

The District also recognizes the importance of criterion (C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems and criterion (E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services and policies. Development and implementation of formative assessment for data-driven instructional decision-making is most effective after a workforce has internalized a set of Early Learning and Development Standards. The District believes that by prioritizing criteria related to child outcomes and workforce development, it will prepare ECEs to implement a comprehensive assessment system when the time comes. Furthermore, DC expects that the Kindergarten Entry Assessment will engender interest in formative assessment among ECEs.

The District did not elect to respond to criterion (E)(2) due to the fact that OSSE is already working diligently on development of the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data (SLED) warehouse, which will house data from the KEA. Work on the SLED is being funded through other sources presently, and the District intends to apply for the next round of longitudinal data system funding to develop these efforts further.

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

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

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

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

X (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

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

X (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

X (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 & Coordinating Early Learning and Development Across the State

The District is dedicated to the development of a statewide ELD system that will include strong participation and commitment across all Participating State Agencies and ELD stakeholders.

While the District has made efforts in establishing an integrated approach to ELD, it recognizes

its need for improvement and has identified critical strategies to ensure the successful coordination of an effective and aligned ELD system.

The table below indicates the alignment of DC’s accomplishments and plan with the selection criteria for (A)(3). [The table shows that DC will be presenting accomplishments in all areas and outlining plans to extend and refine work in alignment with all three selection criteria.]:

Table A3.1 Alignment of Accomplishments and Plan with Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	DC Accomplishments	High-Quality Plan Strategies		
		Strategy A: Map the existing early childhood services landscape in the District	Strategy B: Improve inter-agency collaboration and communication with the public	Strategy C: Develop a comprehensive and strategic fiscal agenda
(A)(3)(a) Identification of interagency governance structure	✓	•	•	•
(A)(3)(b) Demonstrated Participating State Agency commitment to the State Plan	✓		•	
(A)(3)(c) Commitment by a broad group of stakeholders	✓		•	

Goals

- **By 2012, develop a comprehensive ELD website to improve communication of the ELD community with the public (A)(3)(a), (A)(3)(b), (A)(3)(c)**
- **By 2013, create a 5-year ELD statewide budget (A)(3)(a)**

Strategies

Strategy A. Map the existing early childhood services landscape in the District

Strategy B. Improve inter-agency collaboration and communication with the public

Strategy C. Develop a comprehensive and strategic fiscal agenda for the District's Early Learning and Development System

The three strategies that will be addressed in the plan for (A)(3) align with the Mapping and Alignment pillar of DC's reform agenda. By mapping existing ELD services, improving inter-agency collaboration, communicating more effectively with the public and developing a comprehensive fiscal agenda, the District will develop a necessary framework for decision making, will lay the groundwork for improved public communication, and will ensure sustainability of the plan beyond the grant period.

Accomplishments

Governance Structure (A)(3)(a)

During the weeks leading up to the submission of this proposal, the District saw unprecedented collaboration among state agencies and stakeholders, as individuals came together to assess accomplishments and develop plans. One of the most promising accomplishments during this time period was the development of new working relationships and a new way of thinking about collaboration across the District. Proposal development involved collaboration of representative from the following organizations: Offices of the Deputy Mayors for Education and Health and Human Services, SECDCC, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, agency directors for OSSE, DCPS, DOH, DHS, DMH, CFSA, staff from each agency, the Public Charter School Board (PCSB), Head Start, DCPCS (Apple Tree PCS, KIPP DC: PCS, Center City PCS, Dorothy Height Community Academy PCS, Early Childhood Academy PCS, Education Strengthens Families PCS), ELDPs (Mazique Parent Child Center, CentroNia, Martha's Table, Mary's Center, Southeast Children's Fund), CBOs, advocacy groups (National Black Child Development Institute, Fight for Children, DC Action for Children, FOCUS DC), higher education (University of the District of Columbia, Early Childhood Leadership Institute, Catholic University, George Washington University), foundations (Washington Area Women's Fund) and early childhood experts. In addition, community meetings were held to gather input from the SECDCC, representatives of additional CBOs and Family Home Providers, the State

Board of Education, public charter school representatives, the Washington Teachers Union and the general public.

Following is the management plan developed by workgroup representatives for carrying out the reform vision outlined in this proposal.

OSSE will act as the Lead Agency for the RTT-ELC project. Grant-making and oversight authority for all state-level education agency functions required under applicable federal law requirements is vested with OSSE, as per 38-2601.01. OSSE will report to the Deputy Mayor for Education. As Lead Agency, OSSE will be responsible to ensure that all grant activities are executed effectively. This critical function warrants the creation of an office within OSSE, given the significant demands of the RTT-ELC implementation and overall grant management. Adding components of the RTT-ELC application to preexisting OSSE job functions would present a high risk of fragmentation and unclear accountability for outcomes. The RTT-ELC office, with both budget- and program-focused staff, will provide OSSE with the operational capacity to meet RTT-ELC performance goals. While maintaining a dedicated focus on the RTT-ELC grant, broader functions of the budget development, expenditure and performance monitoring and data analysis will work directly with the rest of the OSSE business team to ensure effective operational support and practice across the organization and throughout partnering agencies. Project Management will be carried out by four Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees, as described below. (Please see Appendix A1.2 for the RTT-ELC Organizational Chart.)

The SECDCC will serve as a functioning advisory body to provide policy guidance to the Deputy Mayors for Education and Health and Human Services, and through them, to OSSE and the other agencies on District-wide efforts/policies focused on early childhood education. SECDCC will be ultimately responsible for resolving disputes that may arise as policies and plans are enacted. The SECDCC boasts a diverse membership inclusive of cabinet-level officials, CBO and nonprofit leaders, industry experts, service providers and advocacy organizations. SECDCC's overall charge is to maximize District outcomes, accountability and resource allocation in the area of ELD -- inclusive of ELC grant components.

Table (A)(3)-1 provides an overview of the governance-related roles and responsibilities of partnering agencies in relation to the efforts of the RTT-ELC project.

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)	OSSE will serve as the lead agency and fiscal agent of the RTT-ELC grant. OSSE will be in charge of grant and project management and will report to the Deputy Mayor for Education. Four full time staff will be funded by the grant to serve in project management functions. Two additional FTEs will complement OSSE’s staff to implement grant-funded activities.
Department of Health (DOH)	DOH will serve as a participating state agency, reporting to the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services.
Department of Mental Health (DMH)	DMH will serve as a participating state agency, reporting to the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services.
Department of Human Services (DHS)	DHS will serve as a participating state agency, reporting to the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services.
Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA)	CFSA will serve as a participating state agency, reporting to the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services.
Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF)	DHCF will serve as a participating state agency, reporting to the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services.
Other Entities	
State Early Childhood Development Coordinating Council (SECDCC)	The SECDCC is responsible for improving collaboration among entities carrying out federally funded and District-funded Pre-K and other early childhood programs to improve school readiness and assisting in the planning and development of a comprehensive early childhood education system that serves children birth to 8 years of age. SECDCC has a broad range of responsibilities including increasing the participation of children attending Pre-K programs; improving the quality of these programs; supporting the implementation of Pre-K workforce development programs; and improving early learning policies. The SECDCC may also make recommendations to the DC Council to improve the quality of and expand

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
	<p>access to Pre-K and other early childhood programs.</p> <p>SECDCC will provide guidance to ensure the efficient implementation of all ELC grant program elements and their successful integration into existing District-funded/led programs, services and initiatives. SECDCC will resolve disputes that arise and will provide guidance to the Deputy Mayors of Education and Health and Human Services, and through them, to all participating state agencies</p>
State Interagency Coordinating Council for Part C of IDEA	DC does not currently have an active Council; one is currently in development and will be active by January 2012.
Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education (DME)	The Deputy Mayor for Education (DME) provides oversight of and support for OSSE. The DME will take guidance from the SECDCC and will report directly to the Mayor.

Roles & Responsibilities. The District anticipates that the proposed RTT-ELC project will require an administrative team comprised of five professionals to manage the implementation of the initiative. The ELC project will be in the OSSE and will include the following leadership structure:

- a Project Director, responsible for overall management and coordination of RTT-ELC initiatives
- a Fiscal Director, responsible for overseeing fund distribution and ensuring compliance with financial tracking and reporting requirements
- a Reporting & Implementation Manager, responsible for ensuring that the Executive Office of the Mayor and partnering agencies use RTT funds appropriately/effectively and meet grant objectives

- a Data Manager, responsible for supporting SECDCC and the participating state agencies
- an Early Childhood Specialist with expertise in early learning standards, responsible for coordinating, implementation, training and monitoring of the program standards and facilitation of QRIS Study Group
- an Early Childhood Assessment Coordinator responsible for implementation, training and monitoring of the assessment system and facilitation of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) Design team. In addition, the other state agencies will have implementation staff assigned to support implementation of RTT-ELC activities, as follows:

DME – 1 FTE

DOH – 2 FTE

DHS - .3 FTE

DHCF - .3 FTE

CFSA - .3 FTE

DMH - 1 FTE

This two-pronged approach proposed by OSSE – a team responsible for the overall grant (Project Director, Fiscal Director, Reporting & Implementation Manager, Data Manager, Early Childhood Specialist and the Early Childhood Assessment Coordinator), plus individuals responsible for the effective execution of initiatives in the field – will ensure that RTT-ELC grant funds are deployed effectively and aligned with work across all RTT-ELC initiatives.

Methods for Decision-Making and Resolving Disputes. Decisions related to the RTT-ELC grant will follow the regular chain of command in the District, with the Deputy Mayors providing guidance to their respective state agencies, the Executive Office of the Mayor providing guidance to the Deputy Mayors, and the SECDCC providing guidance to the Mayor. The SECDCC, as the oversight and advisory group to this project will be responsible for resolving any disputes that arise among participating state agencies and/or other stakeholders.

Involvement of Stakeholders. Key stakeholders will be involved through participation on the SECDCC and as participants in various activities outlined within the plans below and in

Sections B through E of this application. As an example, the RTT-ELC Higher Education Consortium, the QRIS Study Group, and the KEA Design Team—all involved in implementation of important activities that support DC’s reform agenda—will involve representatives from teacher preparation providers, professional development providers, CBOs, Family Home Providers, public and public charter school teachers, advocacy groups, early childhood experts and parents. Care has been taken throughout the application to note the participation of families with children with special needs, English language learners and foster parents.

Strong Commitment from Participating State Agencies (A)(3)(b)

All participating state agencies have signed Memoranda of Understanding with OSSE and have entered into an agreement that outlines terms and conditions, especially with regard to leveraging funding and scope of work descriptions, including the requirement to implement and maximize programs. MOUs are contained in Appendix A3.1. Following is an overview of the contents of the MOU.

Terms and Conditions. All participating state agencies have agreed to the same terms and conditions without exception. Terms and conditions involve the following: Assurances, Participating State Agency Responsibilities, Lead Agency Responsibilities, Joint Responsibilities, State Recourse in the Event of Participating State Agency’s Failure to Perform, Modifications, Duration, Confidential Information and Miscellaneous Terms and Conditions.

Scope of Work Descriptions. Each participating state agency has an individualized scope of work description that outlines the Participating State Agency’s responsibilities, broken out by responsibilities for which the Participating State Agency is the owner, or agency responsible for the activity, or key partner. In addition, the Lead Agency’s responsibilities are broken out in the same manner.

Authorized Representative Approval. Each MOU is signed by an authorized representative of the Lead Agency as well as an authorized representative of the participating state agency.

Strong Commitment from Stakeholders (A)(3)(c)

Letters of Support are available in Appendix A3.2. Letters of support have been received from intermediary organizations, advocacy organizations, ELDPs, government agencies, and other stakeholders. Support for DC’s Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge application is strong in the ELD community.

Table (A)(3)-2 lists every intermediary organization and local early learning council in the state and the ones that voluntarily supplied letters of support for DC’s proposal. It should be noted that there is no reason to doubt the support of any of these organizations for the activities proposed. The absence of a letter does not indicate the absence of enthusiasm for the project.

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)?
State Early Childhood Development Coordinating Council	Y
DC Child Care Connections	N
Home Visiting Council	N
Wellness Council	N
DC Association for the Education of Young Children	Y
DC Head Start Association	Y
Washington Association of Child Care Centers	Y

In addition to intermediary organizations and early learning councils, the DC proposal has earned broad support from stakeholder groups, evidenced by additional letters of support (see Appendix A3.2.). Letters from Great Start DC, the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, Action

for Children, CentroNia and AppleTree Early Learning are only a representative sample of the broad support DC has received.

To support the coordination and collaboration of participating state agencies and others in support of DC's ELD reform agenda, a plan has been developed to extend the mapping and alignment pillar of the work.

High-Quality Plan for (A)(3)

Strategy A. Map the existing early childhood services landscape in the District

This strategy will focus on gathering baseline data from existing reports across multiple agencies on a variety of early childhood service indicators, including details on home visiting, workforce, program quality, systems and early childhood education landscape. The information will be collected, aggregated and analyzed to assess the current state of early learning and development in the District with a detailed report of identified gaps in services developed to serve as a roadmap for improvement.

Activity 1: Hold State Advisory Council Summit on the State of Early Childhood in the District

SECDCC will host a State Advisory Council Summit on the State of Early Childhood in the District. Representative stakeholders from state agencies, CBOs, family home providers, Public and Public Charter Schools, higher education, professional development providers, advocacy groups, foundations, intermediary organizations, and families will be invited to gather to study the state of ELD in the District. Information will be shared across agencies, institutions and organizations so that all participants begin with a thorough understanding of what has been accomplished and what remains to be done to achieve DC's ambitious reform agenda.

Activity 2: Conduct a meta-analysis of early learning and development

After holding a State Advisory Council Summit, the SECDCC will embark on conducting a meta-analysis of research on early learning and development in the District. Many policy organizations, higher education professionals and researchers study programs within the District, and it is the intent of this meta-analysis to investigate studies and their findings to determine areas of strength to capitalize upon and areas for growth to target. As part of this meta-analysis,

the DME will conduct a Medicaid rate fiscal impact study to inform future policy decisions related to Medicaid.

1. Hold State Advisory Council Summit on the State of Early Childhood in the District: Spring 2012, SECDCC, DME
2. Conduct a meta-analysis of early learning and development: Summer 2012 – Fall 2012, SECDCC

Milestone. Conduct a Medicaid rate fiscal impact study: Fall 2012, DME, SECDCC

Strategy B. Develop a comprehensive and strategic fiscal agenda for the District’s Early Learning and Development System

The District seeks to develop a comprehensive, coordinated ELD system. To this end, DC needs a more intentional and strategic approach to financing the range of services and programs for young children, particularly those with High Needs who may be touched by multiple systems.

The District seeks to pursue a strategic fiscal agenda that will:

- Develop fiscal policies that move system sectors toward delivery of services in a comprehensive manner
- Provide financial incentives for ongoing quality and system improvement
- Allow and incentivize layering (e.g. braiding and/or blending) of funding streams
- Leverage federal, state, local, and private dollars across systems
- Secure sufficient and sustainable funding to support progress toward common goals

Activity 3: Conduct fiscal analyses and develop a cross-agency Early Learning and Development System Budget for the District.

The District recognizes that a comprehensive review and fiscal analyses of investments in early learning and development can help answer important questions about the range of funding sources and amounts being spent, how funding levels change over time, what gaps might exist for critical populations, and where opportunities exist for blending and braiding of federal, state, local and private funds to address unmet needs and promote optimal child development.

Documenting current funding across programs and agencies into a single Early Learning and

Development System Budget is a crucial first step toward building the District's capacity to understand how much it spends on what services and what options and strategies it should consider to better serve young children and their families. (Schumacher, 2011; Johnson, 2006). The very process of developing such a budget will encourage collaboration and partnership among agencies and programs, and help diverse stakeholders recognize the common goals and objectives they are working toward.

Currently, DC has a Children's Budget but it does not capture the full range of programs and funding streams that touch the lives of young children ages birth to five in the District. The Children's Budget discusses investments related to six city-wide goals for children and youth ages 0 – 19. The most relevant section is *Goal 1: Children are Ready for School*. The narrative for the Children's Budget Goal 1 describes the District's efforts around Pre-Kindergarten funding and quality (little detail) and an early childhood mental health intervention program.

Because the current DC Children's Budget is not sufficient, nor is it intended to inform a comprehensive and coordinated early learning and development system, the District will engage in a strategic analysis of the current financial landscape of birth to five services, programs, and infrastructure across OSSE, DCPS, DCPCS, DHS, DOH, DMH and DCFS and will develop a comprehensive Early Learning and Development System Budget that clearly reports all investments in one location. The DME and DMHHS will coordinate this fiscal planning effort.

The fiscal planning team at DME and DMHHS will gather basic budget data by program, funding stream and target population, and then analyze spending according to the District's early learning and development priorities. In the Fall of 2012, the District will publish a cross-agency Early Learning and Development System Budget for FY 2013 that will then be used to inform a strategic financing plan for the District and can serve as a benchmark for tracking investments and outcomes over time.

3. Conduct fiscal analyses and develop a cross-agency Early Learning and Development System Budget for the District: Winter-Spring 2012, DME, DMHHS, Vendor under DME, SECDCC

Milestone. Draft fiscal analysis due to the SECDCC for feedback: Spring 2012, DME, DMHHS

Strategy C: Improve inter-agency collaboration and communication with the public

In an effort to establish a responsive and effective continuum of early childhood services, work will focus on creating a “one stop” approach for families served through the multiple ELD serving agencies across the District.

Activity 4: Create a single website with extensive listing of services available

Information on services is not currently obtainable through a centralized website, making it difficult for families to understand and review available opportunities. The District will identify all early childhood development services and publish the details of each opportunity within a single website where families can explore potential programs and resources that may be of benefit to their child(ren) and family. This work will be based on DC 311, a city information system and DC 211, a system in development for social services information. Information will be available in multiple languages and in formats that are readable by screen readers and other assistive devices.

4. Create a single website with extensive listing of services for the public: Summer 2012, DME, Vendor under DME

Milestone. Submit initial plan for website: Summer 2012, Vendor under DME

(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) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.

Utilization of Existing Funds and Resources

The District has carefully considered existing funds that support ELD in the planning and design of the proposed project. To ensure that the project supplements and does not supplant existing resources, the District has identified federal, state and local sources of support to determine the most effective manner to leverage resources that will enable the District to meet the goals of the reform agenda in an efficient and timely manner. To that end, the District has identified and allocated the following existing funds in support of the RTT-ELC project:

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>ARRA Funds (SECDCC)</i>		\$30,000			\$30,000
<i>CCDF</i>	\$80,000				\$80,000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>ARRA Funds: Host State Advisory Council Summit on the State of Early Childhood in the District</i> - <i>CCDF: \$5,000 @ Standards Alignment; \$25,000 @ Enhanced Standards Pilot; \$50,000 @ Public Version of Professional Development Registry</i> 					

In partnership with SECDCC, \$30,000 of ARRA funds will be utilized to host a State Advisory Council Summit on the State of Early Childhood in the District. As previously referenced in (A)(3), this event will bring together stakeholder agencies to map out the alignment of systems necessary to achieve DC’s reform agenda of Kindergarten readiness for all children.

CCDF funds have been identified to support a variety of project-related activities. OSSE has committed \$5,000 in support of the new Standards Alignment, \$25,000 in support of an Enhanced Standards Pilot and \$50,000 to create a publicly available version of the Professional Development Registry. A committee of educators will collaborate to work directly with the Early Childhood Education Assessment (ECEA) Consortium to review the existing Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) and build them out to include areas where there are gaps between the ELDS and the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)/Head Start Child Outcomes Framework and will further refine the standards for Pre-K children to include more detailed developmental progression benchmarks for three- and four-year old children. OSSE will provide District-wide professional development to ECEs and informational outreach to

families regarding the standards. Finally, CCDF funds will support the development of a public domain for the Professional Development Registry to serve as a monitoring tool for ECE professionals to track their progress as they gain credits toward degrees and “clock hours” toward licensing requirements and make information available to EDLPs so that the providers can oversee their employees’ progress.

Utilization of Award

OSSE requests an award of \$47,996,924 through the RTT-ELC program to support the comprehensive ELD reform proposed for the District. The cost for the complete RTT-ELC initiative is \$11,255,481 for year one, \$20,337,981 for year two, \$11,600,481 for year three and \$4,802,981 for year four. The District anticipates that the proposed project will impact a minimum of 20,000 children, birth – age 5, annually.

Costs for the project include central operating expenses and salaries of a Project Director, Fiscal Director, Reporting & Implementation Manager and Data Manager, as well as seven PSA Liaisons to ensure coordination of efforts across agencies and five QRIS Monitors to ensure implementation fidelity of the assessment system. Furthermore, the project includes a variety of ELD-specific projects that will establish a unified approach to supporting young children and their families that will ultimately ensure that DC children have access to quality services and are prepared to enter Kindergarten with the skills, knowledge and dispositions they need to be successful. (Please see Appendix A4.1 for Budget Narrative Part I.)

OSSE has coordinated with several State agencies to develop a seamless system for ELD services across the District. As the lead fiscal agent, the OSSE budget will require \$30,278,476 for its role. In addition, the proposed initiative will include the following agencies and associated support for their involvement in the project: 1) DME - \$799,680 2) DOH - \$6,201,160 3) DHS - \$10,100,676 4) DHCF - \$100,676; 5) CFSA - \$100,676; and 6) DMH. \$335,580. (Please see Appendix A4.2 for Budget Narrative Part II.)

Sustainability

The sustainability plan for the RTT-ELC project is focused on establishing a District-wide infrastructure that has the systems in place to support the new ELD culture with the policies and

procedures in effect to ensure their continued implementation. From a financial perspective, it is the intent of the District to embed the activities of the project into the foundation of ELD-serving agencies and organizations so that the impact will continue beyond the award period. Through the implementation of the reform agenda, policy, procedural and capacity-building changes will ensure the ongoing benefit of the project.

In regard to any financial need to support the RTT-ELC initiative beyond the award period, the project requires the District to analyze its existing Children's Budget to ensure that it is effectively utilizing all Federal, State and local support and leveraging financial resources in the most fiscally responsible manner. Through these efforts, the District will map out strategies for future efforts beyond the award period and ensure that all required resources are available to make certain that quality ELD programs remain a priority.

Operationally, the RTT-ELC program will allow the District to achieve cost-saving efficiencies through interagency collaboration, coordinated services to children and families, aligned systems and standards and development of technology solutions that save administrative costs over the long term.

In addition the project will sustain as a core component of activities training for ELD professionals at all levels. By equipping the existing workforce with the skills and knowledge needed to transform the existing ELD system, the District is establishing a cadre of high-quality ELD professionals who are able to maintain services and who will coach colleagues and engage in sharing of best practices in the ELD sector so that all educators are prepared to meet the high-quality demands established by the District.

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 standards¹⁴ 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 has included

¹⁴ 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.

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.

Note to Reviewers: Each of the sections that includes a high quality plan is organized in the following manner:

- Introduction & Overview (Including Alignment with Selection Criteria, Goals, Strategies, and Connection of Strategies with Reform Agenda)
 - Accomplishments
 - High-Quality Plan (Including Activities, Timeline with Milestones, and Person/Group Responsible)
-

(B)(1) Developing and Adopting a Common, Statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System

In order to achieve DC's vision of high quality early learning and development for every child in the District, regardless of ward, family income level or type of ELDP setting, a statewide definition of quality in early learning and development as well as quality assurance mechanisms for monitoring and supporting ELDP attainment of those standards must be firmly in place. The District has notable accomplishments in the area of Quality Rating Systems (QRS), meeting many of the selection criteria outlined in the High Quality, Accountable Programs section of the application. A statewide, tiered rating system known as Going for the Gold has been in effect in DC since 2000, existing as a financial mechanism but encompassing many of the qualities of a Quality Rating and *Improvement* System (QRIS). [Please note that throughout this application, QRS will refer to the *current* tiered rating system, while QRIS will refer to DC's tiered quality rating and improvement system *in the development phase*. The new system will retain its current name, Going for the Gold.] In the last year, DC has worked with local and national experts to enhance Going for the Gold, building on the already existing infrastructure to begin to develop a QRIS that is superior to what is currently in place. In November 2011, OSSE plans to announce draft QRIS program standards that have been developed. It is expected that revisions to these standards will be made in response to the work outlined in the RTT-ELC plan below.

The new Going for the Gold aims to ensure that all young children in DC receive high quality early care and education, regardless of the funding stream that supports their ELDP. The District seeks to transform the input-driven QRS to an outcome, quality-driven QRIS.

NIEER finds that quality of programs within states varies widely, and is often differentiated by the source of the program's funding; Head Start programs outperform state pre-school programs, and both out-perform private pay programs. DC aims to break the link between funding source and quality and ensure that all ELDPs meet high quality standards. The plans below outline how DC will define quality via a QRIS, encourage broad, voluntary participation by all types of ELDPs, provide adequate resources and supports for ELDPs to reach the highest tiers of the QRIS, and hold accountable programs that fail to improve their quality over time.

The table below indicates the alignment of DC's accomplishments and plan with (B)(1) selection criteria. [This table shows that DC will be explaining accomplishments for each of the selection criteria and indicates the presence of a plan for (B)(1)(a) and (B)(1)(b). The third criterion does not have a strategy associated with it since DC is *already* implementing it fully.]:

Table B1.1 Alignment of Accomplishments and Plan with Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	DC Accomplishments	High-Quality Plan Strategies	
		Strategy A: Develop/refine standards	Strategy B: Pilot test standards
(B)(1)(a) Statewide tiered program standards	✓	•	
(B)(1)(b) Quality of standards	✓	•	•
(B)(1)(c) Linkage to state licensing system	✓		

Goal

- By 2013, establish Going for the Gold as a robust, tiered quality rating and improvement system

Strategies

Strategy A. Develop/refine research-based QRIS standards (B)(1)(a), (B)(1)(b)

Strategy B. Pilot test draft revised QRIS standards (B)(1)(b)

The strategies above directly support DC’s reform agenda for early learning and development. By enhancing standards and ensuring their alignment with national standards, DC makes certain that as the District dedicates technical assistance and offers incentives to programs for moving up in the tiers of Going for the Gold, DC is actually supporting research-based best practices that will deliver positive outcomes for children. By piloting standards and collecting feedback, the District ensures that as the QRIS is scaled statewide, it will result in an efficient, effective system for program improvement.

Accomplishments

As DC has elements of a fully developed QRIS, the systems in place provide a solid foundation on which to construct a robust QRIS within a short time frame. This section details the accomplishments already realized in DC related to Going for the Gold and (B)(1) selection criteria.

Overview of Going for the Gold QRS

Going for the Gold was established in 2000 to “fulfill the following objectives: 1) reward programs that excel, 2) increase quality of care and education for children and families in the District of Columbia, 3) bring new providers into the subsidy system, 4) increase subsidy slots, 5) increase compensation for providers, and 6) help consumers be more informed about options.” This current QRS, however, has only realized objectives 1, 3 and 4. It has been historically used as a financial tool, with subsidy being directly tied to the tiered rating of participating agencies. It is a required system for *CCDF funded programs only*; programs submit documents, become rated and then receive subsidy reimbursement at the rate assigned to their tier. Once subsidy tier is assigned, EDLPs are reviewed annually to validate rating levels.

Currently, the system consists of a document review in which submitting programs are analyzed according to existing QRS standards. Once all programs are reviewed and rated, monitors conduct a site visit to determine how programs are meeting terms of subsidy agreements, validating documents submitted to the committee. These site visits ensure that programs are fulfilling their agreements. For more on this monitoring process, please see section (B)(4). In cases where programs are not performing to standard, their rating is adjusted. A full profile of DC’s Going for the Gold system is available for review in Appendix B1.1.

In current practice, accreditation status plays a significant role in determining the tier of a program. Those given a “Bronze” rating are not accredited, a “Silver” rating indicates those programs in the process of becoming accredited and “Gold” is given to those who have achieved accreditation from a national accrediting body. In the forthcoming QRIS, in addition to accreditation, ratings will be more closely tied to *performance* in relation to a succession of program standards that are linked to quality.

Current DC Program Standards utilized in the QRS (B)(1)(a)

The Going for the Gold program details standards for each tier, with different indicators for home and center providers. The indicators ensure that each rating tier holds programs accountable to the same standards. For example, in the indicator area of Environment, center-based programs are rated based on The Environment Rating Scale, while family child care facilities are rated in The Family Day Care Rating Scale.

The standards that are publicly available in the QRS are not used with absolute fidelity. What has been implemented on the ground has focused primarily on accreditation from national groups like the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Council on Accreditation, and National Association for Family Child Care accreditation.

New draft revised standards are available for centers and family home providers. These will be made public in November 2011. Copies are available as Appendix B1.2 and B1.3. These draft standards are based on Head Start Program Performance Standards, the Office of Child Care Draft Benchmarks for Quality Improvement and the District's vision for program quality. The draft standards have also been aligned with NAEYC accreditation standards. (A crosswalk is available in Appendix B1.4.)

Internal and external working groups, including home providers, center providers, charter school representatives, public school representatives, membership organizations, provider organizations, director organizations, and the DC Head Start Association, have reviewed the draft standards. A public forum was also held to gather feedback. OSSE led a meeting with several national experts – Zero to Three, the Office of Head Start, the National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center, and the National Black Child Development Institute were among those present. Experts offered feedback, and revisions have been made to the standards based on expert recommendations. As the major detail missing in the current QRS is the “improvement,” portion of the QRIS system, the National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center resources were consulted to inform the draft standards and the building of systems for incentives and supports. The next steps will be a review of the new QRIS from the SECDCC, opportunities for public comment, and then validation of the system from a national early childhood expert.

The crosswalk below displays that all of the new QRIS Program Standards address all Program Standard Components outlined in B(1)(a) and are also linked to the State licensing system B(1)(c). Categories are as follows: (1) Professional Development and Training, (2) Learning Environment, (3) Curriculum and Learning Opportunities, (4) Family Engagement, (5) Licensing Compliance, (6) Nutrition and Wellness, (7) Business and Administrative Practices, (8) National Accreditation, and (9) Program Evaluation and Quality Improvement.

Table B1.2 Alignment of Revised Draft QRIS Program Standards and Components

Required Standard Components	New QRIS Standard Category								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Early Learning and Development Standards		X	X						
A Comprehensive Assessment System									X
Early Childhood Educator Qualifications	X						X		
Family engagement strategies				X		X	X		
Health promotion practices		X				X			
Effective data practices							X		
Environment ¹⁵		X							X
State Licensing Compliance					X				

State Licensing Linkage. DC’s licensing regulations are robust, compared to other states. The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies ranks DC third in the nation for oversight and regulation. DC licensing and inspection requirements apply to all programs that are not otherwise exempt (e.g., Pre-K programs in the public schools and public charter schools). The exceptions to this regulation are outlined in the District’s Child Development Facility rules,

¹⁵ Environment is not a required standard component, but it is included here due to the prominence DC places on quality learning environments as a measure of program quality.

Title 23, chapter 3 of the DCMR § 301 “Exemptions from Licensure”. The text of this provision is as follows:

301.1 The provisions of this Chapter shall not apply to the following:

- (a) Occasional babysitting in a babysitter’s home for the children of one family;
- (b) Informal parent-supervised neighborhood play groups;
- (c) Care provided in places of worship during religious services;
- (d) Care by a related person, as defined in section 399 of this Chapter; and
- (e) Facilities operated by the federal government on federal government property; except that a private entity utilizing space in or on federal government property is not exempt unless federal law specifically exempts the Facility from District of Columbia regulatory authority.

100 percent of non-exempt programs are required to be licensed and inspected. Participation in the current QRS is directly related to the State licensing system. No program can be a part of the QRS system unless it has a valid Child Development Facility License in good standing, with no pending actions.

The revised QRIS will continue the requirement of licensure for program participants that are not otherwise regulated by the State. In fact, QRIS draft standards have been built upon licensing regulations. For example, since ratio and group size are already included in licensing regulation, the QRIS did not need a new standard in this area. Professional development training hours required for staff are also designed to align with and extend current licensing requirements.

High-Quality Plan for (B)(1)

Strategy A. Develop/refine research-based QRIS standards. (B)(1)(b)

Draft standards for both centers and family home providers have been developed. These standards must still, however, be vetted through a process of public engagement and expert validation. Through this process, the standards must be refined so that they are clear, measureable and meaningfully differentiate program quality levels. Through alignment with

national standards, new QRIS standards will be aligned with best practices that are expected to lead to improved learning outcomes for all children.

Activity 1: Align draft standards with nationally recognized accreditation standards.

OSSE will contract with an expert in early childhood education to study the new draft program standards during Winter 2012 (after the draft standards have been announced but before they have been implemented). Work will focus on conducting a crosswalk with a representative sample of nationally recognized standards, to build on the NAEYC alignment already completed. Results of the alignment work will be incorporated into the standards before QRIS implementation in Summer 2012. In addition, attention will be given to ensure that the standards require ELDPs to meet the needs of special populations of students, including children in foster care.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties.

1. Align draft standards with nationally recognized accreditation standards: Winter 2012 - Spring 2012, Consultant under OSSE
Milestone. Complete crosswalk: Spring 2012, OSSE

Strategy B: Pilot test draft revised QRIS standards. (B)(1)(a), (B)(1)(b)

Revision and implementation of the QRIS will occur as an iterative process with elements of the QRIS being built out as earlier elements are piloted and finalized. The first step of this process is to pilot test the draft revised QRIS standards with current QRS participants.

Activity 2: Pilot newly enhanced program standards.

The new standards will be piloted in Winter 2012 – Spring 2012 in a subset of QRS participating programs that are yet to be determined. This will be a no-fault pilot, where ELDPs may choose to adjust their tier to match the findings of the pilot review, or they may keep their existing tier (as determined by their attainment of old QRS standards). The no-fault aspect will encourage EDLPs to engage in the pilot process so that they can learn about the new standards in a no-risk setting and so that they may provide feedback for improvement of the system. The pilot period will serve as a “capacity building” period for both OSSE and the provider community.

The pilot will be followed by a full implementation of standards for current QRS participants in October 2012 - September 2013. This implementation plan will also offer programs not currently participating the chance to see the enhanced standards at work and consider how participation in the QRIS might benefit their work. A strategy aimed at increasing the number and type of programs participating in the QRIS is outlined in Section (B)(2).

A contractor will be hired through OSSE to oversee the pilot process and ensure that feedback is collected and considered for ongoing improvement. (Please note that revisions to the QRIS system based on the pilot are outlined in Section (B)(2).)

Activities, timeline and responsible parties.

2. Pilot newly enhanced program standards: Winter 2012– Fall 2012, OSSE
Milestone. Begin full roll-out to current QRS participants: Fall 2012, OSSE

Table (B)(1)-1: Status of all Program Standards currently used in the State							
	Program Standards Elements						
	<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
Pre-K Operating Guidelines	•	•	•	•	•	•	
QRIS/Subsidy	•	•	•	•	•	• (quality improvement plans)	
Licensing	•		•	•	•	•(regulations about record keeping)	
Head Start	•	•	•	•	•	•	
<i>Licensing standards are implicit within QRIS, due to the fact that all participating programs must be licensed. The QRIS Study Group (see Activity 3 in B2) will study ways to include school-based Pre-K and</i>							

Table (B)(1)-1: Status of all Program Standards currently used in the State							
	Program Standards Elements						
	<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
<i>Head Start programs in the new Quality Rating and Improvement System. The vision is that DC will have one set of aligned program standards that apply to all ELDPs across the District.</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) Maximizing District Program Participation in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System

The District's new QRIS will be a vehicle for ELDP quality improvement and assurance across all program settings in DC. By including ELDPs of all types, more children throughout the District will have access to programs that are actively engaged in a continuous improvement process that combines high-quality professional development and ongoing growth opportunities for professionals with technical assistance and incentives for programs. No matter whether children are infants or preschoolers, no matter their zip codes, no matter if they receive care in a classroom in a public school, a center, or a family child care program, all children in DC will benefit from attending programs that are held to high standards through the tiered QRIS.

Ensuring that all programs in the District use a common set of standards to define high quality will increase parity and equity across program types that currently is missing due to disconnected funding streams, program standards, and accountability measures under which different program settings operate. Ultimately, children with high needs will have access to programs meeting the same level of quality standards as their more advantaged peers, and families of all children will be able to compare and choose quality across the entire market of programs in the District.

Increasing the numbers of ELDPs that participate is imperative to realizing this vision of high quality opportunities for all children. The QRIS will provide mechanisms to support quality assurance, accountability, targeted technical assistance and support to enable this vision to become a reality.

The District will modify the current QRS to allow involvement of ELDPs that do not receive child care subsidy payments. Currently, Pre-K school-day classrooms that operate in public and public charter schools are not eligible to participate in QRS. They operate under their own sets of standards and accountability measures, giving parents no common framework to identify, compare, and choose the ELDPs that best meet their families' needs and deliver high quality learning and development opportunities for their children. Through the design and roll-out of a revised QRIS, a new system will be open to all ELDPs to help make the quality comparison process more transparent

DC will start in a position of strength here, because nearly 60 percent of all programs that are currently eligible to participate in the existing QRS are, in fact, participating. This participation rate far surpasses the national average of 34 percent. This is in large part thanks to the requirement that all programs receiving child care subsidy payments participate and their quality level dictates the reimbursement rate they receive. Participating ELDPs currently include all programs contracted to receive child care subsidy payments as well as Pre-K classrooms within community based organizations established with the Pre-K Act. Early Head Start and Head Start (aside from those in DC Public Schools) are participating as well, as are before- and after- care programs in public and public charter schools. Notably, all six Head Start programs not located within public schools not only participate but are rated at the Gold level. Given the high number of three- and four-year old children enrolled in the District's universally available public Pre-K programs, the District's plan to open voluntary QRIS participation to DCPS and charter LEA Pre-K programs will create the potential to reach a dramatically greater portion of DC's youngest children through the QRIS.

In addition to involving programs not currently participating in the QRIS, DC's plan includes devising incentives for their participation and ensuring that a common definition of high quality ELDP applies to all programs across the District. The table below indicates the alignment of DC's current accomplishments, as well as its plans with (B)(2) selection criteria. [This table

shows that DC will be explaining accomplishments for (B)(2)(a) and (B)(2)(b) and that the District has developed a plan for (B)(2)(a) and (B)(2)(c).]:

Table B2.1 Alignment of Accomplishments and Plan with Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	DC Accomplishments	High-Quality Plan Strategies		
		Strategy C: Revise QRIS for District scale-up	Strategy D: Incentives for ELDP participation	Strategy E: Common Definition of Quality
(B)(2)(a) Policies and practices for publicly funded participation	✓	•	•	•
(B)(2)(b) Policies and practices for helping families	✓			
(B)(2)(c) Increasing program participation		•	•	•

Goals

- By 2014, the QRIS program standards will define high quality EDLP in DC, and Going for the Gold will be used as the common quality metric for ELDPs across all sectors in the District
- By 2015, 100% of all ELDPs currently eligible for QRS will participate in the revised QRIS
- By 2015, 50% of public and public charter schools with Pre-K classrooms in the District will participate in the QRIS

Strategy C: Revise QRIS to allow involvement from all types of ELDPs, regardless of funding stream.

Strategy D: Design a system of incentives and quality program supports that are appropriate for and attractive to ELDPs across all sectors. (B)(2)(a), (B)(2)(c)

The strategies of allowing all programs to participate in the QRIS and devising a system of incentives and program supports to encourage ELDP participation are in direct alignment with the quality assurance pillar of DC's reform agenda. By involving the maximum number of programs in QRIS, the District will be able to engage providers in a continuous improvement process. Only by involving and engaging programs of every type across the District will DC be able to ensure a wide range of high quality choices that meet the needs of families and provide exemplary early learning and development for all children with high needs.

Accomplishments

At present, DC has one of the more generous child care subsidy income eligibility ceilings for families, when compared nationally with other states. In DC in 2011, a family can be 247% above the poverty line and still be part of the subsidy system. Reimbursement payments are made to ELDPs under contract with OSSE to offer subsidized slots to children of qualifying families. Going for the Gold is a true Tiered Quality Reimbursement System because the quality levels are tied directly to tiered subsidy reimbursement rates. ELDPs ranked at the Gold level are reimbursed at a higher rate than those at a Silver level or Bronze level.

Policies and practices for publicly funded participation (B)(2)(a)

As explained above, DC has an impressive level of participation in its current QRS system. Approximately 60% of total eligible programs participate. See Table (B)(2)(c) for the specific types of EDLPs that currently participate in Going for the Gold. Programs operating under child care subsidy contracts with the District are required to participate, and the District has a relatively high population (26.9%) of low-income children. There is a strong incentive for child care centers and family home providers to participate in the QRIS so that they can be eligible to contract for subsidized slots. Tiered reimbursement levels are designed to offer a direct financial incentive for programs to achieve the Gold level. Families who qualify for child care subsidy slots are required to pay a monthly co-payment based on an established sliding scale (described below). The District pays providers the difference between the co-payment and the 75th

percentile of the market rate (based on 2001 market rate) for Bronze-tier programs. Silver and Gold tier programs receive higher reimbursement rates. This is a desirable incentive because DC guarantees contract payments to providers who fill subsidy slots rather than paying pro-rated rates based on child attendance.

As an example, the lowest state reimbursement rate (for ELDPs at the Bronze tier) is \$632 per month for center care for a four-year-old and \$862 per month for center care of a one-year-old. The 75th percentile of the 2010 market rate is \$1,460 per month, so centers participating in the Child Care Services Subsidy Program earn approximately 46% (for care of a four-year-old) and 41% (for care of a one-year-old) of the 75th percentile of market rates.

Because reimbursement rates increase as programs move to higher tiers of the QRS, there is incentive for programs to continuously improve. Currently at the Gold level, ELDPs receive \$909 per month for care of a four year old. In effect, an ELDP can realize a 22% reimbursement rate increase by moving from Bronze to Gold. But even at the Gold level, reimbursement is 44% less than the 75th percentile of 2011 market rates (Schulman & Blank, 2011). DC has proposed an activity below to bring subsidy rates into alignment and strengthen the incentive of the tiered subsidy rates.

In addition to increasing reimbursement rates commensurate with tier level, OSSE also offers Infant and Toddler Expansion Grants for providers participating in the QRS that are located in Wards with the greatest needs. The purpose of these grants is to expand, convert or start up infant and toddler care slots. In FY 2011, five home providers and seven centers received Infant and Toddler Expansion Grants.

Policies and practices in place for helping families (B)(2)(b)

Although reimbursement rates leave much to be desired, family co-pays within the District are generous relative to other states. According to the “*State Child Care Assistance Policies 2010: New Federal Funds Help States Weather the Storm*” by the National Women’s Law Center, as a percentage of family income, DC sets parent co-payments among the lowest in the nation in terms of percentage of family income.

Families applying for the Child Care Services Subsidy Program are eligible if their income is equal to or less than 247% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or 80% of the current State

Median Income (whichever amount is lower). Families already receiving services remain eligible until their incomes exceed \$51,101. Families with incomes at or below 50% of the FPL pay no fee. Payments are determined by a sliding scale, available in Appendix B2.1. The payments are deemed affordable because no family is required to pay more than 10% of their annual income for child care, and most will pay well below that percentage.

For example a family of three with an income at 150% of the poverty level and one child in care will pay \$102/month or 4% of their annual income. A family of three with an income at 100% of the poverty level and one child in care would pay \$44/month or 3% of the family income.

Comparatively, the 75th percentile of the 2010 market rate is \$1,170 per month, and families who are not eligible for subsidy typically pay this amount or higher for care.

DC is proud that 100% of families who are eligible for subsidized care receive services. More than 22,300 children participated in the District's Child Care Services Subsidy Program in FY 2009, of whom 9,000 were children ages 0 to 5. There is no current waiting list, and there was no waiting list in 2010.

High-Quality Plan for (B)(2)

Strategy C: Refine QRIS to allow involvement from all types of ELDPs, regardless of funding stream.

As the QRS is revised, care will be taken to re-write program eligibility requirements to ensure that the participation of public and public charter Pre-K programs is encouraged. A QRIS Study Group will be convened to study current processes and make recommendations to OSSE for the revision of policies related to QRIS participation.

Activity 3: Convene a District-wide QRIS Study Group.

A District-wide QRIS study group will be convened with members from the broad range of EDLP settings to allow for the adaptation of Going for the Gold with input from those programs considering participation.

Monthly meetings will begin in January 2012 with participation from representatives of OSSE, DCPS, DCPCS, private providers, CCDF programs, child care homes, and Head Start programs. An early childhood expert will serve as a consultant-facilitator of the group. The QRIS Study

Group will meet monthly to discuss and make recommendations to OSSE regarding revisions to the QRIS to accommodate the differences in program standards, administrative procedures and rules that the current revised QRIS standards and quality measures do not address or consider. This will remove potential barriers, burdens and disincentives for programs that do not fit the traditional structure under the QRIS. The QRIS Study Group will examine results from the pilot (outlined in Activity 2, above) and will make recommendations to OSSE related to revisions to the standards and processes implemented. Recommendations will include adjustments to the QRIS program to allow participation from ELDPs of all program types. These recommendations will be used by OSSE to roll-out the District-wide QRIS in FY 2014.

3. Convene a District-wide QRIS Study Group: Winter 2012 – Fall 2013, OSSE
Milestone. QRIS Study Group makes recommendations to OSSE for full District roll-out: Spring 2013, OSSE

Strategy D: Design a system of incentives and quality program supports that are appropriate for and attractive to ELDPs across all sectors.

The District's current Going for the Gold tiered reimbursement system is designed to meet the needs of programs receiving CCDF funds. While the program standards contain important indicators of quality for all ELDPs, the system of evidence review and monitoring are designed to align with the specific needs of licensed child care centers and homes and will need considerable revisions to be applicable to school-based ELDPs. Additionally, the QRS operates as a mechanism for determining subsidy reimbursement levels, and the incentives for participation are largely financial. Because school-based programs, before- and after-care for wrap around services and private-pay programs are not subject to the same type of funding mechanism as CCDF programs, attracting these programs to participate in the QRIS will require a broader menu of incentives.

Activity 4: Revise QRIS to ensure appropriateness for all program types.

The QRIS Study Group will examine all elements of Going for the Gold to ensure that mechanisms and protocols are appropriate for all program types, including those programs that do not receive CCDF funding. The QRIS Study Group will make recommendations to OSSE to include in the 2014 roll-out of the revised QRIS.

A project manager at OSSE and a contractor with the professional knowledge and expertise to refine the QRIS will implement the recommendations of the QRIS Study Group and revise the QRIS for full implementation in FY2014. It will further refine the tool based on the lessons learned from the pilot year and initial year of implementation and will ensure that the tool is useful and appropriate for all sectors of programs in the District.

Ensuring that all programs in the District can use a common set of standards to define high quality will remove the link between funding stream and level of quality that is currently implicit. Children with high needs will attend programs meeting the same level of quality standards as children in private-pay care, and families of all children will have access to information and resources to be able to compare quality across the entire market of programs in the District.

Activity 5: Design and implement incentives to encourage QRIS participation from ELDPs.

Convening a District-wide QRIS Study Group with representation from the broad range of ELDP settings is likely to encourage the buy-in and engagement of a strong number of these programs to fully participate in the QRIS. The QRIS will be a voluntary system, but the QRIS Study Group will weigh options and develop recommendations on a menu of participation incentives that match the needs and interests of different EDLP settings. Specifically, the QRIS Study Group will examine the Child Care WAGE\$® (Wage\$) wage supplement program and expansion of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project (TEACH) scholarship opportunity currently offered through the National Black Child Development Center.

All ELDPs will be granted access to resources, technical assistance and attractive professional development options that the programs would not otherwise have, as well as an opportunity – through competitive Center for Excellence contracts – for high quality programs rated at the Gold levels to serve as model sites, giving technical assistance to other programs of the same program type. By allowing educators within high quality programs to share their expertise and practice with others, DC will leverage the reach of the most skilled educators, thereby improving practice at lower tiered programs and providing opportunities for professional growth and recognition for those in the higher tiers. Family child care programs would benefit from a similar

incentive, being invited to participate in a peer network for knowledge sharing. Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) within participating ELDPs would be offered opportunities to advance levels on the Career Path through participation in QRIS-related technical assistance. Centers might be offered quality improvement grants to help them implement needed changes to improve. Ideally, as the QRIS Gold Level becomes synonymous with high quality in the market, programs will be motivated to participate and use the Gold Medal brand as a marketing tool on their website, advertising, and marketing materials.

Performance measures for increasing the number and percentage of ELDPs participating in QRIS appear below.

The QRIS Study Group will meet monthly to discuss and make recommendations to OSSE regarding ways to incentivize Going for the Gold to the broad range of ELDPs in the city. These recommendations will be used by OSSE to roll-out the District-wide QRIS in FY 2014.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties.

4. Revise QRIS to ensure appropriateness for all program types: Winter 2012 – Summer 2013, OSSE

Milestone a. QRIS Study Group makes recommendations to OSSE for full District roll-out: Spring 2013, OSSE

Milestone b. Consultant delivers outline of revisions to be made: Summer 2013, Consultant under OSSE

5. Design and implement incentives to encourage QRIS participation from ELDPs: Winter 2013 – Summer 2013, OSSE

Milestone a. Conduct fiscal impact study of raising current subsidy reimbursement rates: Winter 2013, OSSE

Milestone b. QRIS Study Group makes recommendations to OSSE for full District roll-out: Spring 2013, OSSE

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: In community-based organizations (CBOs)</i>	14	14	100	16	100	18	100	21	100	24	100
State-funded preschool programs – in DC Public Schools	85	0	0	0	0	17	20	34	40	43	50
State-funded preschool programs – in DC Public Charter Schools	60	0	0	0	0	12	20	24	40	30	50
Early Head Start and Head Start ¹⁶ (State is not a HS grantee; expansion is out of DC’s jurisdiction)	6 HS 6 EHS	6 6	100	6 6	100	6 6	100	6 6	100	6 6	100
Programs funded by IDEA, Part C	Not applicable in DC. Funding from IDEA, Part C follows the child rather than flowing to specific programs.										
Programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619	Not applicable in DC. Funding from IDEA, Part B follows the child rather than flowing to specific programs.										
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	Title I funded programs are found in both DCPS and DCPCS. See DCPS and DCPCS rows for additional information.										

¹⁶ 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	<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	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Programs receiving from CCDF funds	279	279	100	287	100	295	100	303	100	312	100

Baseline data indicate actual data.

(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) State Rating System and Monitoring of Programs Participating in the Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System.

DC currently employs a QRS, which includes a three-tiered rating system. This rating system is monitored by a document review and site visits. As stated above, DC's current QRS system operates to rate and monitor the involved programs in an efficient way. Of the programs involved, the following breakdown details how many programs have been given Gold, Silver or Bronze ratings:

- For centers:
 1. Gold Level- 62 /32%
 2. Silver Level- 39 /19%
 3. Bronze Level- 99 /49%

- For family child care:
 1. Gold Level- 12 /15%
 2. Silver Level- 3 /4%
 3. Bronze Level- 64 /81%

Programs that seek participation in Going for the Gold submit the appropriate documentation to be reviewed. OSSE completes an administrative review and assigns a preliminary tier.

To ensure that involved programs are properly rated and upholding their rating, monitoring reviews are scheduled. Monitors visit the site to verify the information submitted as part of the paper review. This way, all participating providers are held accountable to meeting the QRS standards. Site visits will also be included in the new QRIS, so that all programs are also held accountable in that system. Under the new system, however, monitors will have specific monitoring tools that align with QRIS standards. These tools are currently under development; a current draft of monitoring guidelines is included as Appendix B3.1.

Site monitors will need to be trained in the use of these tools and normed to assure inter-rater reliability (B)(3)(a). In addition, systems will need to be developed to inform families and community members about the new system and the ratings assigned to participating programs (B)(3)(b).

The table below indicates the alignment of DC's accomplishments and plan with (B)(3) selection criteria:

Table B3.1 Alignment of Accomplishments and Plan with Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	DC Accomplishments	High-Quality Plan Strategies		
		Strategy E: Improve inter-rater reliability	Strategy F: Develop monitoring/ TA schedule	Strategy G: Improve information distribution
(B)(3)(a) Valid and reliable tool for monitoring programs.		•		
(B)(3)(a) Schedule for monitoring and rating.			•	
(B)(3)(b) Information to parents and public	✓			•

Goal

- All ELDPs participating in Going for the Gold will receive rigorous monitoring and technical assistance

Strategy E: Develop program monitoring tools and mechanisms for inter-rater reliability (B)(3)(a)

Strategy F: Develop a schedule for monitoring and ongoing technical assistance (B)(3)(a)

Strategy G: Improve distribution of information to parents and public (B)(3)(b)

DC’s reform agenda requires a concerted focus on quality assurance. Through the use of valid and reliable tools and processes for inter-rater reliability, the QRIS will enable the District to determine levels of program quality and disseminate this information to the public. The vision is to provide high quality early learning and development for every child within the District of Columbia, especially children with high needs.

Accomplishments

Disseminating Information to Parents and Public (B)(3)(b)

Currently, community members, both parents and the general public, are able to call the Resource and Referral Agency (R&R) to obtain information about EDLPs participating in the QRS. The public can call and ask what programs are available, and R&R can disclose the tier rating of any rated program. Providers can inquire about the professional development offerings available. Work is already underway to create a searchable web-based interface through which parents can locate programs and see their ratings.

OSSE is enhancing its Early Childhood Education Information Management System (EIMS) that currently captures licensing data, provider demographic info, and reports from various rating monitors. The next phase is to add the data elements for subsidy program, capacity, enrollment, and tier quality marker. When fully implemented, this system will also have a GIS component, so parents can see where different programs are located, which ones have vacancies, and what their ratings are. All monitors who conduct site visits for the QRIS will have handheld devices, allowing for instantaneous reporting of results from monitoring visits to the appropriate database. Because EIMS is funded through other sources, Race to the Top funding is not requested for this project.

High-Quality Plan for (B)(3)

Strategy E. Develop program monitoring tools and mechanisms for inter-rater reliability. (B)(3)(a)

Development of program monitoring tools has begun at OSSE (see Appendix B3.1 for progress to date), and as the QRIS standards are fully developed, these tools will be able to be finalized and tested for validity and reliability. Careful selection and training of QRIS program monitors is essential for the proper implementation the rating and improvement tools. Program monitors must have content knowledge which enables them to fully understand the ELDS (described in Section C), pedagogical knowledge which enables them to fully understand the core knowledge areas for ECEs (described in Section D), and program design knowledge which enables them to fully understand the QRIS. Not only do monitors need to understand the standards and how they look in practice, they must be able to utilize the monitoring tools provided by OSSE and

understand how to provide feedback. Monitors must be informed on rating practices in order to assure fidelity of implementation of the QRIS throughout the District.

Activity 6: Develop and field test program monitoring tools.

OSSE will continue developing program monitoring tools that align with draft standards. These tools will be used in the pilot described in Activity 2, and results of the pilot will be examined by the QRIS Study Group as part of their role in making recommendations to OSSE on the revisions needed prior to District-wide implementation.

Activity 7: Prepare high quality program monitors.

Monitors who conduct on-site visits will need to be trained to use the new standards-based rating tools designed by OSSE. Currently, OSSE does not have the staffing capacity to expand monitoring efforts. As part of the High-Quality Plan, OSSE will hire at least five full time monitors to conduct QRIS accountability work. These monitors will need to display experience and expertise in early childhood education as well as a command of skills necessary for program monitoring. Monitors will receive training on the monitoring tools to be used during site visits as well as inter-rater reliability training. OSSE will ensure that all monitors are properly trained to the level of 85% inter-rater reliability and are capable of providing feedback to all programs involved in the QRIS. Inter-rater reliability training will occur through the use of video cases with which monitors will practice and norm their scoring and feedback to programs.

Refresher training and norming will occur for all monitors on an annual basis.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties.

6. Develop and field test program monitoring tools: Fall 2012– Summer 2012, OSSE
Milestone. Conduct pilot to test monitoring tools: Summer 2012, Vendor under OSSE
7. Prepare high quality program monitors: Winter 2012 and ongoing, OSSE
Milestone. Develop training modules: Winter 2012, Vendor under OSSE
Provide follow up inter-rater reliability training to QRIS monitors: Summer 2014, Vendor under OSSE

Strategy F: Develop a schedule for monitoring and ongoing technical assistance (B)(3)(a)

In order to ensure adequate time and capacity for a thorough quality review, OSSE will conduct on-site quality monitoring of all QRIS programs on a three-year cycle. Separating programs into cohorts will allow for an organized system of rotation and ease for adding new programs that join the QRIS and allow for a rotating cycle of quality improvement technical assistance and support. All programs will, by virtue of government regulation (whether licensing or school regulation), be monitored for basic health and safety on an annual basis. This three-year cycle allows for an intense focus on quality based on program standards. It will entail a much more rigorous review than that currently in place with the current QRS.

Activity 8: Organize all QRIS participants into cohorts to ensure on-site monitoring of all ELDP sites on a 3-year cycle.

After a pilot year in FY 2012, the three-year cycle will begin in FY 2013 with cohort 1 (including participating CCDF programs). FY 2014 will see the review of cohort 2, which will contain mixed types of programs (from multiple sectors). FY2015 will include cohort 3; the three-year cycle will begin again in FY2016. All programs will be evaluated, with the benefit of information comparing programs across sectors and across years. Continued participation by all CCDF programs guarantees that the neediest children are served by programs that are held to high levels of program review.

In the case that a review reveals a licensing infraction or decrease in tiered level, programs will be placed on an annual review cycle until the problem is remediated.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties.

8. Organize all QRIS participants into cohorts to ensure on-site monitoring of all ELDP sites on a 3-year cycle: Winter 2012 –Fall 2015, OSSE

Milestone. Begin the three-year cycle: Winter 2012, OSSE

Strategy G: Improving distribution of information to parents and public (B)(3)(b)

Consumer education is an important component of the QRS and its conversion to a QRIS system. OSSE is currently developing new ways to transmit information to parents and the public at large. The development of the EIMS and its interaction with the R&R is already federally funded

with a local match, but additional funding is needed for a public service campaign to make the public aware of the system and how to utilize it.

Activity 9: Develop a public service campaign around QRIS.

OSSE will hire a marketing firm to design outreach to families and information on the QRIS system. This campaign may include a focus groups with parents, development of a QRIS logo, messaging and a strategic marketing plan including radio and/or television spots, billboards, bus posters, pamphlets, website enhancements, signage for providers and/or a marketing tool kit for providers to promote themselves. This marketing campaign is a first step in making the public aware of the Going for the Gold program and its rating system.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties.

9. Develop a public service campaign around QRIS: Winter 2015 – Fall 2015, Vendor under OSSE

Milestone. Vendor develops plan for marketing campaign: Spring 2015, Vendor under OSSE

(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) State System for Improving the Quality of Participating Programs

DC has a mixture of accomplishments in the area of ELDP improvement. Its Pre-K programs met eight of ten indicators on NIEER's 2010 State of Preschool Report. Although its current QRS design is not sufficient to strongly propel improvement, it does encourage its programs to do better and improve their ratings, and thus their reimbursement levels. To support the enhancement toward a true QRIS, policies and procedures will be put in place that encourage improvement through more rigorous program standards, a more intensive monitoring program, professional development and technical assistance. Already, DC has some of the most generous benefits and eligibility criteria for families, as described in Section (B)(2). DC will continue to provide an array of service options to meet the needs of families, including full-day care, non-traditional hours and full-year programs. Options will continue to proliferate under the new QRIS.

The table below indicates the alignment of DC's accomplishments and plan with (B)(4) selection criteria. [This table shows that DC will be explaining accomplishments for (B)(4)(a) and

(B)(4)(b) and that the District has developed a plan for (B)(4)(a) and (B)(4)(c). No plan has been developed for (B)(4)(b) since that criterion is fully developed in the District.]:

Table B4.1 Alignment of Accomplishments and Plan with Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	DC Accomplishments	High-Quality Plan Strategies	
		Strategy H: Supportive quality improvement	Strategy I: Model teacher observation tool
(B)(4)(a) Policies and practices that support improvement	✓	●	●
(B)(4)(b) Support to working families	✓		
(B)(4)(c)(1) Increasing programs in top tiers and numbers of children in top tier programs		●	●

Goal

- After establishing a baseline in 2013, at least five new ELDPs per year will be rated at the Gold level.

Strategies

Strategy H: Implement supportive quality improvement processes within Going for the Gold (B)(4)(a), (B)(4)(c)

Strategy I: Provide model teacher observation tools aligned with QRIS standards (B)(4)(a), (B)(4)(c)

By embedding professional development within the QRIS process, DC achieves two of its reform agenda commitments. At once, DC is able to improve workforce quality through

improved professional development and also ensure alignment of technical assistance with program, workforce and early learning standards. Delivery of high quality professional development that aligns with overall systems is a powerful strategy for improving student outcomes.

Accomplishments

Policies and Practices that Support Improvement (B)(4)(a)

As described above, DC's current QRS is a true tiered reimbursement system designed to encourage and reward programs for achieving higher levels of quality. For example, a center-based program operating at the entry (or Bronze) level receives up to \$40.70 per day per infant in their care, while the same program at the Gold level receives up to \$54.41. While current subsidy rates are insufficient to realize the potential of this mechanism, DC has a high quality plan to strengthen incentives, as described in Activity 5 above.

OSSE also currently employs several strategies to increase the quality of providers participating in the QRS. The Licensing Technical Assistance and Professional Development for Persons with Limited-English Proficiency Grant provides training, support and technical assistance to limited-English proficient District residents seeking a child development facility license from OSSE. Sixteen new licensed providers were approved in FY 2011, and five more are currently pending approval. The Accreditation Facilitation Program grant provides targeted training and technical assistance to help ELDPs achieve national accreditation. Eleven ELDPs in the QRS system are currently being coached through the accreditation process. The Pre-Kindergarten Program Assistance grant provides financial assistance to DC public and public charter schools and community based organizations pursuing accreditation, re-accreditation or other high quality standards. Thirty-one programs have benefitted from this support.

Additionally, as described in Section D, a draft career guide has been developed based on ECE credentials and aligned Workforce Core Knowledge standards that keep educators continually improving and growing professionally. The Career Guide is a lattice system for early childhood educators developed over the last year to support implementation of the new QRIS.

An additional tool is currently being developed to augment the support of program improvement: the Professional Development Registry. This online tool will go live prior to the end of 2011.

The Professional Development Registry allows ECEs to record their participation in professional trainings and experiences. This new professional development (PD) registry will track ECE progression along the Career Guide (described in Section D). It will also include teacher demographic information, credentials, degree information, and courses taken over the years to meet requirements.

The Certified Trainer Registry is part of the PD Registry and contains an updated listing of trainers and programs that have been authorized to provide professional trainings (e.g., CPR/First Aid, Parent Engagement) that include content that is aligned with ECE Core Knowledge areas. Because the trainers listed in the registry have been approved, they are able to offer relevant trainings that allow participants to advance on the career guide levels, achieve professional outcomes, and enhance the lives of children.

Professional development will be augmented in the new QRIS and is highlighted in Activity 10. All ECEs must have annual training, according to licensure standards. In addition to the current licensing requirements, QRS requires additional training, depending on tier level, from 18 hours for educators at the Bronze level to 30 hours at the Gold level. The new QRIS will continue to require professional development at each of the three levels, plus a new level called Gold Plus, to further differentiate the tiers.

Existing Support for Families with High Needs (B)(4)(b)

DC supports families with high needs in many ways. These needs include needs involving access to high quality care, financial support, and support in developing parenting skills.

Strategies for improving access to care are detailed above include the sliding scale of family co-pay rates, the Licensing Technical Assistance and Professional Development for Persons with Limited-English Proficiency Grant, and the Infant and Toddler Expansion Grants. Notably, CCDF has no waiting lists, and all families who meet eligibility requirements will be served.

In 2008, the District set out to provide universal Pre-K across the District. It was estimated that 2,000 additional slots were needed and that it would take six years to build to capacity to meet public need. In fact, with a concerted effort, it only took two years to reach 2,000 additional slots, and all families District-wide are now able to access free Pre-K for their children.

Currently, there are many different hours of operation for ELDPs District-wide, with nontraditional hour providers also available. There are also part-day, full-day and before- and after-care for those parents who are in school themselves. Licensing and eligibility documents for families list services for which families may be eligible, such as free breakfast, lunch and snack programs. Home visiting programs also serve families across the District (detailed in Section C). Family literacy is encouraged through book clubs, and out of school time grantees provide other literacy services to recent immigrant families.

The new QRIS standards feature indicators focused on parent engagement. For more information about these requirements, please see Section C which provides detail on family engagement strategies in the District.

High-Quality Plan for (B)(4)

Strategy H: Implement supportive quality improvement processes within Going for the Gold (B)(4)(a), (B)(4)(c)

In the current Going for the Gold tiered reimbursement system, the onus for quality improvement rests squarely on the shoulders of participating programs. Programs apply for a particular tier within the system and provide adequate documentation to support their application. Once a program is classified within a tier, annual reviews are scheduled to monitor that programs have maintained the same level of quality. OSSE provides professional development and technical assistance to programs participating in QRS, but there is not a coordinated effort to support programs in actively moving from lower to higher tiers over a prescribed period of time. As a result, many programs remain in the tier in which they initially enter the QRS. In the new QRIS, disincentives for not moving up in tiers will be built into the system. This mandatory movement will be supported through a coordinated quality improvement system that will allow the District to provide targeted support to assist lower-quality programs to move to higher tiers over a three-year time period. This continuous improvement cycle will help ensure that all families in the District have access to high quality ELDPs for their children and ensure that all children are Kindergarten-ready. Performance measures for increasing the number of ELDPs in the top tiers of the QRIS appear in Table (B)(4)(c)(1), and performance measures for increasing the number

of children with high needs who are enrolled in those highly-ranked programs appear in (B)(4)(c)(2).

Activity 10: Implement targeted technical assistance.

OSSE will begin by providing targeted support in the most common areas of deficiency using a baseline quality study and infant/toddler report from GreatStart DC. According to these sources, the most common areas of deficiency are personal care (diapering, sanitation, etc.) and professional development. OSSE will build out technical assistance around personal care and will follow the plan for professional development opportunities as outlined in Section D.

In subsequent years, OSSE will analyze data from monitoring visits and program self-assessment data and will work in concert with the QRIS Study Group to identify the top two priorities for support annually. Each year, technical assistance materials (checklists, quick reference charts, online modules, webinars, and/or in person trainings) will be developed to meet the needs of participating programs. Technical Assistance will be targeted to programs receiving ratings at the bronze level. Ensuring that all programs in the QRIS are consistently improving will result in higher-quality care for children with the highest needs in the city.

Activity 11: Establish Centers for Excellence and the Family Provider Peer Network.

Through competitive funding opportunities, centers and family care providers will be able to apply to serve as a Center for Excellence or a featured site in the Family Provider Peer Network. Centers and family child care providers will be selected based on exceptional performance in two or more QRIS standard areas. These ELDPs will design open house or training programs on site, and other QRIS participants of the same type (centers or family child care) will be invited to attend. This activity not only fosters peer to peer support; it also provides a mechanism whereby the best programs can continue to grow and refine their practice. Five ELDPs of each type will be selected to serve in these leadership positions. ECEs within those organizations will be able to earn credits for advancement along the Career Guide for their participation.

Activity 12: Collect Program Improvement Plans from participating ELDPs.

After each round of review (every third year), programs will submit Program Improvement Plans to OSSE. The Program Improvement Plan (PIP) will identify development priorities for the

following three years as well as develop a plan to address any deficiencies identified in the previous review. OSSE will monitor all PIPs to ensure that programs are taking measures for continuous improvement by requiring reports on PIP activities during each review cycle.

All activities under Strategy H will begin in the CCDF programs currently participating in the QRS and will extend to all programs that participate in the revised QRIS during scale up.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties.

10. Implement targeted Technical Assistance: Winter 2012 and ongoing, Vendor under OSSE, QRIS Study Group

Milestone a. Develop strategies for first round of technical assistance: Spring 2012, Vendor under OSSE

Milestone b. Develop protocols for identification of priority areas for Technical Assistance and targeted TA: Fall 2012, Vendor under OSSE, QRIS Study Group

11. Establish Centers for Excellence and the Family Provider Peer Network: Fall 2013 – ongoing, OSSE

Milestone a. Five centers and five family child care providers are selected to serve in leadership roles: Winter 2014, OSSE

Milestone b. Model ELDPs begin sharing sessions: Summer 2014, OSSE

12. Collect Program Improvement Plans from participating ELDPs: Fall 2014 and beyond, OSSE

Milestone. Develop format for Program Improvement Plans: Spring 2015, Vendor under OSSE, QRIS Study Group

Strategy I: Provide model teacher observation tools aligned with QRIS standards (B)(4)(a) and (B)(4)(c)

Research consistently shows that the teacher is the single-most important school-based factor influencing student learning and development. Nurturing the professional growth of teachers is essential to the success of any program improvement system, and the messages that teachers receive about their performance must be aligned with overall program standards articulated in

the QRIS. By developing a model teacher observation tool and encouraging programs to utilize it with instructional staff, OSSE and the QRIS Study Group will support the direction of professional growth of the District’s early childhood educators, thus leveraging improvement for entire programs.

Activity 13: Develop model teacher observation tool.

Many school-based Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 programs utilize a regular process of teacher observation and feedback to keep their ECEs growing and developing. Most other ELDPs do not engage in this practice. In order to capitalize on strengths within the District and share ideas across sectors as well as facilitate the alignment of teacher development with Program standards, OSSE will develop a model teacher observation tool in collaboration with the QRIS Study Group. This observation tool will provide the link between teacher specific components of the QRIS and the expectations for teachers. ELDPs participating in QRIS will be required to utilize the observation tool.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties.

- 13. Develop and field test model teacher observation tool: Spring 2013 - Winter 2014, OSSE and Vendor under OSSE, with the QRIS Study Group

Milestone. Collect feedback on draft observation tool from QRIS Study Group: Winter 2014, QRIS Study Group, Vendor under OSSE

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	FY2011 279 programs	287 DCPS 0 DCPCS 0 CCDF 287	341 DCPS 17 DCPCS 11 CCDF 295	395 DCPS 34 DCPCS 22 CCDF303	471 DCPS64 DCPCS 41 CCDF312

System		Private Pgs 0	Private Pgs18	Private Pgs 36	Private Pgs 54
Number of programs in Tier 1 – (Bronze)	163	147	140	133	128
Number of programs in Tier 2 (Silver)	42	54	73	99	131
Number of programs in Tier 3 (Gold)	74	86	128	163	212
Number of programs in Tier 4	n/a				
<i>Baseline data are actual data.</i>					

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 classroom – in Community Based Organization	512	512	100	590	100	680	100	782	100	900	100
State-funded preschool programs – in DC Public Schools	3,717	0	0	0	0	743	20	1487	40	3717	100
State-funded preschool programs – in DC Public	3,303	0	0	0	0	661	20	1321	40	3303	100

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	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Charter Schools											
Early Head Start and Head Start ¹⁷	3,935	3935	100	<i>State is not a HS grantee; expansion is out of OSSE's jurisdiction</i>							
Early Learning and Development Programs funded by IDEA, Part C	<i>Not Applicable in DC. Funding from IDEA, Part C follows the child rather than flowing to specific programs.</i>										
Early Learning and Development Programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619	<i>Not Applicable in DC. Funding from IDEA, Part B follows the child rather than flowing to specific programs.</i>										
Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	<i>Title I funded programs are found in both DCPS and DCPCS. See DCPS and DCPCS rows for additional information.</i>										
Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program <i>Assuming funding</i>	9073	2178	24	2722	30	3176	35	3629	40	4083	45

¹⁷ 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	<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		
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
<i>remains constant</i>												

(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) State Evaluation System

The vision for evaluation of the QRIS is that, annually, an independent evaluator will assess the quality of the QRIS through the use of nationally normed valid and reliable tools on a sample of providers who participate in the QRIS to determine the validity of the ratings and any correlations with student learning. OSSE will use scores to determine strengths and weaknesses of the QRIS system and utilize results to refine Going for the Gold.

In 2010-2011, the Center for Urban Progress at Howard University evaluated the Pre-Kindergarten Enhancement and Expansion Program. The evaluation looked at thirty Pre-K community-based classrooms, twenty DCPS classrooms and eighteen DC public charter classrooms. A community organization, Great Start DC, ran a parallel study on over 100 infant/toddler classrooms. The evaluation design utilized the following measures of quality in these classrooms: the Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS), Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised (ECERS-R), and the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Pre-K (ELLCO Pre-K). Research questions included the following:

1. What is the status of Pre-K classroom quality using structured classroom observation tools?
2. How are programs addressing the need for training specific to the development of bilingual children, instruction in bilingual classrooms, finding appropriate staff and educational materials, and finding out whether the families and children in these classrooms have distinct needs?
3. What are Pre-K student outcomes (expressive and receptive language) using standardized assessment tools?
4. How were trained and credentialed professionals utilized to conduct classroom observations using the tools identified as best practice to measure language and literacy, teacher/child interactions, child outcomes, and other required activities?

DC intends to utilize a similar design to test the QRIS system. By examining practice at the classroom level and looking carefully at student outcomes, the District should be able to determine areas in which the QRIS system should be improved.

The table below indicates the alignment of DC’s plan with (B)(5) selection criteria.

Table B5.1 Alignment of Accomplishments and Plan with Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	DC Accomplishments	High-Quality Plan Strategies	
		Strategy J: Study QRIS Tiers and Program Quality	Strategy K: Study Tiers and Child Outcomes
(B)(5)(a) Validating the reflection of differential levels		•	
(B)(5)(b) Assessing the extent quality relates to child progress			•

Goals

- Through a rigorous third-party evaluation, understand the strengths and weaknesses of the QRIS by 2015.

Strategies

Strategy J. Examine the extent to which tiers in the QRIS accurately reflect differential levels of program quality (B)(5)(a)

Strategy K. Assess the extent to which tiers are related to children’s learning, development and school readiness (B)(5)(b)

DC’s reform plan focuses not only on ensuring high quality care environments for infants and toddlers but also on ensuring that all children enter Kindergarten ready to learn. By focusing an evaluation on student outcomes rather than on inputs, DC is able to hold itself accountable to this vision. In addition, by exploring differential levels of program quality according to measures outside the QRIS, DC is able to validate the QRIS standards and expose areas where the system

might be improved. This quality assurance mechanism is a central pillar of the DC reform agenda.

High-Quality Plan for (B)(5)

Strategy J: Examine the extent to which tiers in the QRIS accurately reflect differential levels of program quality (B)(5)(a)

In order for programs to buy-in to the rigorous requirements of the QRIS, the District must take steps to ensure that there is proof that QRIS standards do, in fact, differentiate programs by accepted measures of quality. At the start of QRIS implementation, DC has a valuable opportunity to collect information on pilot programs and their ratings, even prior to full implementation of the revised QRIS. Conducting an evaluation at this crucial moment in scale up is essential to incorporating findings of the study into the QRIS prior to its release District-wide. Use of external measures of program quality will validate the system and confirm its use as a lever for quality improvement.

Activity 14: Conduct an external implementation evaluation of the enhanced QRIS

Since DC has enhanced its QRS and will implement a phased roll-out beginning in late Winter 2012, the most appropriate type of evaluation is that which will examine the implementation of the new system. Specifically, DC will work with an external evaluator to conduct a validation study of the enhanced QRIS standards. Key questions to be answered as part of this evaluation include: How is the quality rating constructed? What elements of the quality rating are most variable and which contribute most to the final rating? How do the ratings correlate with an independent measure of program quality (such as the Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale, Classroom Assessment Scoring System, Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised, or the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Pre-K)?

The implementation study will occur at the same time and in the same sites as the pilot described in Activity 2, above. Results will be reported to the QRIS Study Group and OSSE for improvement of the QRIS system prior to District-wide roll-out in 2014.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties.

14. Conduct an external implementation evaluation of the enhanced QRIS: Winter 2012 – Winter 2013, Evaluator under OSSE

Milestone. Select evaluator through competitive bid process: Winter 2012, OSSE

Strategy K: Assess the extent to which tiers are related to children’s learning, development and school readiness (B)(5)(b)

By 2015, the enhanced QRIS will have been in effect in DC for three years and will have expanded to include providers from multiple settings. Conducting an outcome evaluation at this time will allow for adjustments based on the findings of the implementation study and will permit time for providers to work their way through one evaluation cycle of the QRIS system.

Activity 15: Conduct an external outcome evaluation of the associations between participation in the QRIS and child care quality outcomes

Being able to identify a relationship between programs operating at the highest tiers in the QRIS and improved child outcomes is the ultimate goal of any Quality Rating Improvement System. The District is hungry for data connecting strategies (such as participation in QRIS) with student outcomes. The second evaluation of the QRIS will be a descriptive study.

A descriptive outcome evaluation, such as that conducted in Kentucky on the KIDS Now! initiative, might answer questions such as: What is the relationship between the type and quality tier of providers and levels of child outcomes, controlling for social-economic differences? For which disadvantaged groups are there achievement gaps, and in which programs are these gaps lessened? What attributes of providers are related to whether their quality improves (e.g., staff qualifications, participation in professional development opportunities, prices charged or rates of reimbursement received, management practices)?

Programs will be rated using an external measure of program quality, and then child outcome data will be collected to determine student knowledge and skills. Child outcome data will be based on standardized assessment tools, such as those that measure expressive and receptive language (Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and Expressive Vocabulary Test) and on teacher-rated social behavior measures.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties.

15. Conduct an external outcome evaluation of the associations between participation in the QRIS and child care quality outcomes: Summer 2014 – Winter 2015, Evaluator under OSSE

Milestone. Select external evaluator through competitive bid process: Fall 2014, OSSE

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

Since the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) released a statement in 2002 highlighting the importance of early learning standards and guidance on how states could implement effective and appropriate standards for all young learners, much attention has been devoted to establishing and implementing appropriate and rigorous standards for early learning. NAEYC identified issues such as responsiveness to increasing cultural and linguistic diversity, increasing childhood poverty rates, and the relative lack of standardization among early learning programs, which carried particular poignancy for the policymakers in the District.

The District stepped up to the challenge of addressing these issues, and since 2005 has accomplished much with regard to ELDS. In 2008, the District worked with local and national experts through broad stakeholder engagement and several public hearings to develop and adopt appropriate ELDS for infants and toddlers that addressed all of the Essential Domains of School

Readiness, and in the same year increased the expectations inherent in its Pre-K ELDS (C)(1)(a). All Early Learning and Development Programs in the District that receive state funds are required to use the ELDS in their curriculum and activities (C)(1)(c).

Prior to 2010, DC’s ELDS were aligned with the state’s K-3 standards. However, in 2010 DC adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCCS) and as a result there is work that needs to be done to align the ELDS with the CCSS. A workgroup has started examining the current ELDS to determine needed revisions, and the District has developed a plan to accelerate and complete this work (C)(1)(b).

The table below indicates the alignment of DC’s accomplishments and plan with the selection criteria for (C)(1). [The table shows that DC will be presenting accomplishments in three of the four areas and outlining plans to extend and refine work in alignment with all four selection criteria.]:

Table C1.1 Alignment of Accomplishments and Plan with Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	DC Accomplishments	High-Quality Plan Strategies		
		Strategy A: Align ELDS with CCSS	Strategy B: Create supports for special populations	Strategy C: Train educators on new ELDS & supports
(C)(1)(a) Appropriate ELDS that address all EDSR	✓		●	
(C)(1)(b) ELDS aligned with K-3 standards	✓	●		
(C)(1)(c) ELDS used across programs	✓	●	●	
(C)(1)(d) Support for ELDS across all ELDP				●

Goals

- By 2012, adopt ELDS that are aligned with the CCSS and Head Start Healthy Child Framework. This will include the creation of a document outlining Standards Entry Points for differentiated learning that address the learning needs of English Language Learners, students with Special Needs and specific milestones for three- and four-year olds (Pre-K3 and Pre-K4).
- By 2012, train all instructional staff, statewide, on the revised ELDS and companion Standards Entry Points manual.
- By 2013, implement ELDS that are fully aligned with the CCSS.

Strategies

Strategy A. Draft, adopt and implement ELDS standards that align with Common Core State Standards and Head Start Healthy Child Framework (C)(1)(b) and (C)(1)(c)

Strategy B. Draft, adopt and implement supports for special populations of students to meet the ELDS standards (C)(1)(a) and (C)(1)(c)

Strategy C. Promote understanding and implementation of revised standards and Standards Entry Points. (C)(1)(d)

The above strategies are key to supporting the District's reform agenda, particularly in the areas of mapping and alignment, better training for providers and instructional staff, comprehensively addressing the needs of infants and toddlers and increasing focus on school readiness. Alignment of standards ensures that all of the work of ECEs and programs is following the same path: the road toward Kindergarten readiness. Taking the time to develop on-ramps and entry points to the standards for students who need differentiated instruction ensures that all students will be on the path toward academic success.

Accomplishments

High-Quality Early Learning & Development Standards (C)(1)(a)

As stated above, the District has made great strides in the area of ELDS. Through close collaboration and consultation with national experts, community organizations and research

institutes, and an examination of other states' existing standards, DC formulated a set of high quality ELDS that are developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate for children from birth through Kindergarten entrance (see Appendix C1.1). The standards were developed in collaboration with NAEYC, Head Start, several institutions of higher education, representatives of ELDPs within the District and other early childhood experts (see Appendix C1.2).

The ELDS for infants, toddlers and preschoolers also meet the “essential feature” of including “significant, developmentally appropriate content and outcomes” (NAEYC & NAECS/SDE, 2002, p. 4). The ELDS give emphasis to all domains of development and learning; they are meaningful and important for a child’s current level of development and in laying the foundations for future learning; they act as appropriate expectations through linking content and desired outcomes to specific ages or developmental periods; and they are more than mere simplifications of the standards for older children, rather they are based on significant early learning and development research (pp. 4-5).

Alignment with Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (C)(1)(b)

In 2010, the District joined other states in adopting the CCSS. In so doing, DC proved its commitment to providing District youth with an exceptional education that will prepare them for college and the workforce. Since then, DC has been examining its ELDS and identifying areas in which they need to be adjusted to come into closer alignment with the CCSS. A basic comparison of the current ELDS and the CCSS for English Language Arts shows that DC’s standards are already in close alignment with the CCCS (see Appendix C1.3). The District recognizes that some work remains to be done to align the existing ELDS with the CCSS, and a workgroup has already commenced work on this issue. For example, the ELDS need to be revised to include an emphasis on phonetic awareness and developmentally appropriate technology use. A plan is in place to build out the standards to better align with CCSS, with the goal of completing the work by the start of the 2012-13 school year.

ELDS Implementation (C)(1)(c)

The District currently requires that all programs receiving public funding integrate the ELDS across all curricula and activities, including all center-based programs receiving Pre-K Expansion and Enhancement Grants (funded through the District’s Pre-K Enhancement and

Expansion Amendment Act of 2008). An example of compliance with this requirement is Creative Curriculum used by at least 30% of Public Charter School LEAs surveyed. Creative Curriculum is aligned with the ELDS. Other curricula used that align with the ELDS are Opening the World of Learning, Everyday Mathematics, High Reach Pre-K and Passports. DCPS is implementing Tools of the Mind in over 150 Preschool/Pre-K and Kindergarten classrooms. This early learning curriculum was selected due to its alignment with the DC ELDS as well as the CCSS in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math for Kindergarten.

A sterling example of high quality professional development activities in the District is the partnership between AppleTree Early Learning PCS, Early Childhood Academy PCS, and DC Preparatory Academy PCS. These schools worked together to create Every Child Ready, a Response to Intervention model for preschoolers through an Early Reading First Grant. These schools also received an Investing in Innovation (I3) Grant in 2010 to continue their work on this project, which focuses heavily on intense coaching of instructional staff to improve learning outcomes, based on the ELDS.

High-Quality Plan for (C)(1)

Strategy A. Draft, adopt and implement ELDS standards that align with Common Core State Standards and Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. (C)(1)(b) and (C)(1)(c)

This strategy will focus on building out the existing ELDS to come into closer alignment with the CCSS and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. As illustrated by Appendix C1.3, the District's existing ELDS are already closely aligned with the Kindergarten English Language Arts standards in the CCSS. However, there are gaps that need to be bridged to create a fully integrated program of learning from birth to high school. The specific areas that need to be addressed to accomplish this goal are:

- Increasing emphasis on phonetic awareness standards.
- Expanding the ELDS to include introduction to technology use.
- Refining the Pre-K standards to include more specific developmental progression benchmarks.

In addition, work must be done to examine the alignment between ELDS and CCSS mathematics standards for Kindergarten and between the ELDS and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework.

Activity 1: Engage with the Early Childhood Education Assessment (ECEA) Consortium for support in standards revision

In recognition of the work that remains to be done to build out the existing ELDS to better align with the CCSS and Child Outcomes Framework, OSSE will engage with the Early Childhood Education Assessment (ECEA) Consortium for support. The ECEA, part of the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), “focuses on helping states design and implement standards for children’s learning and development through early childhood program quality, child and program assessments, data systems, and accountability initiatives...state-based systems should be comprised of early learning standards, child assessments, and program evaluation; connected to early childhood curricula, instruction, and professional development; and committed to tracking progress for children, programs, and the system” (CCSSO, 2011). Through this collaborative, DC will engage with ECEA members including Connecticut, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, Ohio and Wyoming, and will gain capacity for standards alignment work. Furthermore, this collaboration will improve the technical understanding of how to integrate ELDS into all Program Standards, activities, materials and curricula across programs.

A committee of educators within DC (the “Standards Committee”) will be formed to take the lead in collaborating with the ECEA and building out the existing ELDS. The committee will include representatives from various early learning programs across the District, including public and public charter LEAs, private schools, licensed care providers (center-based and home-based) and early learning and development centers, as well as higher education providers, parent representatives and national early childhood experts. Particular consideration for representation on the committee will be given to organizations which have shown outstanding academic results working with high need children, including those with special needs and ELLs.

Activity 2: Revise standards to align with the CCSS and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework

The Standards Committee will work directly with the ECEA to review the existing ELDS and build them out to include areas where there are gaps between the ELDS and the CCSS/Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. Furthermore, the standards for Pre-K children will be further refined to include more detailed developmental progression benchmarks for three- and four-year old children. Currently, the ELDS for these age groups are articulated as general development and learning benchmarks that children should meet before they enter Kindergarten. To inform these benchmarks, the Standards Committee will reference the same sources used to develop the existing ELDS, including the NAEYC and National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS-SDE) early learning standards position statement (2002). Adding more detailed benchmarks within each domain will assist teachers in observing and measuring children’s development during their two years in a Pre-K program. Refining the standards in this way also furthers DC’s reform agenda by placing specific focus on school readiness.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

1. Engage with the ECEA: Winter 2012 – Summer 2012, OSSE
Milestone a. Hold first meeting between the ECEA and Standards Committee: Winter 2012, OSSE
2. Revise standards to align with CCSS and Head Start Child Outcomes Framework: Spring 2012 – Summer 2012, OSSE, Standards Committee

Strategy B. Draft, adopt and implement supports for special populations of students to meet the ELDS standards. (C)(1)(a) and (C)(1)(c)

The NAEYC and NAECS/SDE have emphasized that “the content of effective early learning standards, and expectations for children’s mastery of the standards, must accommodate the variations—community, cultural, linguistic, and individual—that best support positive outcomes. To do so, early learning standards must encompass the widest possible range of children’s life situations and experiences, including disabilities” (2002, p.5). In practice this means that in order to ensure ELLs and children with special needs are prepared to enter Kindergarten, there has to

be flexibility in the standards but also appropriate guidelines for teachers and caregivers to use that can inform their teaching practices and help these children succeed. This guidelines would include on-ramps and entry points for children who are not yet developmentally ready to work on the indicators at the standard level—in other words, guidance on how to provide scaffolded instruction to get these children school ready.

As outlined in Section A, DC serves large numbers of English Language Learners and children with special needs. By ensuring Kindergarten readiness for these subgroups of students, DC will set them up for success in becoming college and career ready. Strategy 2 will focus on directly addressing these special populations of students. These populations, though included in the existing ELDS, are not specifically addressed, making it difficult for care providers and educators to accurately guide their learning. To bridge this gap, the standards will be built out to include developmental milestones and entry points for differentiated instructions. The implementation of the ELDS will require making the standards accessible for ALL students. To enable teachers to identify each child’s level of development and learning and how to best differentiate instruction, DC has devised a two-pronged approach to providing these supports:

- Continue work with the ECEA to build out standards to specifically address ELLs and children with special needs.
- Engage with DC-based early learning research center(s) or organization(s) for guidance on best practices on differentiated early learning instruction and develop a *Standards Entry Points for Differentiated Learning* manual.

This strategy is important for renewing DC’s focus on serving students of diverse linguistic and developmental starting points, and improving the chances of these students to achieve success in school. This again feeds into the District’s reform agenda discussed in section (A).

Activity 3: Build out ELDS to address ELLs and students with special needs

The Standards Committee will continue to work with the ECEA to build out the ELDS to include on ramps and entry points for these two subgroups of students. This activity will overlap with the work to better align the ELDS with the CCSS to ensure that the newly-articulated standards for ELLs and special needs students maintain the alignment. In addition, special care will be taken to ensure that the standards meet the needs of children in foster care, especially standards related to

social and emotional development. As mentioned in Activity 1, the Standards Committee will be composed of stakeholders from across the District, and specifically include special education and ELL experts. These experts may come from the OSSE Division of Special Education, the DCPS Office of Special Education, the DC Special Education Cooperative, the National Association for Bilingual Education, the National Center for Learning Disabilities, or other professional organizations.

Activity 4: Engage with local experts to develop a Standards Entry Points for Differentiated Learning manual

DC is home to a broad pool of expert educational organizations, such as the NAEYC, Zero to Three, and the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center; and research centers located at universities like Howard University, George Washington University, and Georgetown University. The Committee will reach out to such organizations to partner with them to develop the *Standards Entry Points for Differentiated Learning* manual, called for in the District’s reform agenda. These organizations have expertise in young learners and can provide guidance on best practices for helping specific subgroups of students become Kindergarten-ready. OSSE will engage them to examine the research to determine how the skill-mastery progression of ELLs and students with special needs can be integrated into a set of entry points that can be used effectively by early childhood caregivers and teachers to differentiate instruction according to an individual child’s starting point and allow children to set challenging but achievable goals.

Activity 5: State Board of Education approval of revised standards

DC’s governance structure—and its small size—enables the District to adopt standards more quickly than other states, with meaningful stakeholder involvement and minimal committee work. The District’s governance structure was established in 2007 when the Public Education Reform Amendment Act (PERA) (a) transferred control over the District’s sole geographic LEA to the Mayor; (b) created the District’s first stand-alone state education agency; and (c) established the State Board of Education. Under this structure, state academic standards must be recommended by the State Superintendent for Education and approved by the State Board of Education. The law also mandates that District academic standards be coherent and rigorous,

encourage the teaching of advanced skills and be regularly updated (Section 403 of PERA as codified at D.C. Code § 38-2652).

DC's recent adoption of comprehensive health standards is evidence of the District's broader ability to adopt effective standards efficiently. The comprehensive health standards, though significantly more controversial than ELDS, were swiftly adopted by the DC State Board of Education, with significant public input. Similarly, the Mayor's office, the State Board of Education and OSSE are united in a firm commitment to quickly adopt the revised ELDS. Once the standards are adopted, they must be utilized by all licensed providers in the District.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

3. Build out ELDS to address ELLs and students with special needs: Winter 2012 – Fall 2012, OSSE

Milestone a. Draft revised standards: Fall 2012, OSSE, Vendor under OSSE

Milestone b. Submit draft to stakeholders and the public for comment and vetting: Fall 2012, OSSE

4. Engage with local experts to develop a Standards Entry Points for Differentiated Learning manual: Fall 2012 – Winter 2013, OSSE

Milestone a. Draft *Standards Entry Points* manual: Fall 2012, OSSE, Vendor under OSSE

Milestone b. Submit draft of manual to stakeholders for comment and vetting: Winter 2013, OSSE

5. State Board of Education approves revised standards: Spring 2013, OSSE, Board of Education

Strategy C. Promote understanding and implementation of revised standards and Standards Entry Points. (C)(1)(d)

The NAEYC and NAECS/SDE position statement emphasizes that there needs to be “significant expansion of professional development...if all early childhood teachers and administrators are to gain knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to implement the early learning standards”

(2002, p. 8). This is particularly true when standards have been revised and new materials have been introduced to support the standards. In order to make sure all of the above work is implemented across all programs, and to support the District's reform goal of better training, the District needs to ensure that early care and education professionals are trained on the new standards and the adjoining support materials. Though it is a requirement for all licensed providers to be familiar with the ELDS and to select a research-based curriculum from the list of approved curricula offered by OSSE, there is room for improvement in ongoing training and support. The District will work with LEAs, private schools and other providers and stakeholders at all stages of implementation and training. Rolling out the new standards and the associated training will be an open and transparent process, and input will be invited from all schools, providers, and stakeholders.

DC will adopt an approach compatible with the Universal Design for Learning. Training will be prepared for three types of delivery: paper-based, in-person and online training modules to cater to the different learning styles of users. Other resources will also be made available in paper and online that can be accessed by educators, administrators, parents and other stakeholders.

Utilizing this strategy for training, the District hopes to create an early education workforce knowledgeable about the outcomes which their students are expected to reach and able to design instruction that meets the developmental needs of all students so that they can be working toward meeting those outcomes and fostering Kindergarten-readiness. Furthermore, educating families about the ELDS, related materials and curricula is crucial to promoting family engagement and understanding.

Activity 6: Train providers in the effective implementation and use of new standards and support materials.

The District's small size allows for an efficient roll-out and implementation of the revised ELDS. The State roll-out plan for ELDS includes (1) standards materials and a user-friendly website for teachers, parents and other key stakeholders, (2) in-person and online training modules, and (3) implementation of a coach training model for job-embedded support.

The paper-based, in-person and computer-based training, which will be offered to all instructional staff across all programs, will include an introduction to the new standards and an

explanation of how they relate to the old standards, mapping of the new standards against program standards and the state Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and specific information about how to use the Standards Entry Points manual to meet the needs of ELLs and students with special needs. The trainings will be offered at different locations across the District and will include early morning, evening and weekend opportunities to accommodate the various obligations and schedules of providers. The Effectiveness Manager for RTT-ELC, in conjunction with the Professional Development Unit at OSSE, will monitor participation through the Professional Development Registry outlined in Section D to ensure that all licensed providers are participating in either online modules or face-to-face training sessions.

In addition, meetings will be held quarterly during the 2013-14 school year to provide support to providers in curriculum alignment and job-embedded coaching around standards implementation. One representative from each ELDP will be offered the opportunity to attend statewide consortium meetings. Given the diverse nature of ELDPs across the District, each will be able to determine who to send to these meetings that will best meet the needs of their program (directors, curriculum specialists, coaches, etc.). Experts in the area of curriculum adaptation for students with special needs, as well as for ELLs, will attend each meeting to provide guidance on implementation for special populations. This “coaching model” will allow provider representatives to take best practices and flexibly adapt them as needed to fit their program’s context. Through coaches training, this representative will become qualified to train other instructors and staff in their program on the new standards, entry points and materials. The District recognizes that instructional staff may require additional on-the-job coaching in addition to their initial training in order to effectively weave the ELDS through instructional activities and materials, and the coaching model allows for on the ground, embedded support for every provider. Recognizing the added responsibility for these coaches to share their new knowledge and support their programs to implement necessary changes in practice, the District plans to offer additional financial compensation commensurate with this added role.

At the program level, QRIS monitoring will provide follow-up and support to ensure that coaching is taking place. (See Section B for a discussion of strategies to ensure continuous improvement of programs as supported by the QRIS.)

Activity 7: Educate families about the new ELDS

Families will be included in the training process via hard-copy and online materials. Flyers will be sent home with every child and included in welcome packets for all entering students. These flyers will include an introduction to the ELDS, developmental milestones and tips on how to monitor a child's progress in mastering standards. All website and hard copy materials intended for families will be available in a number of languages to facilitate communication with families where English is not the language spoken in the home, in accordance with the Language Access Act of 2003. In addition, aligned with the District's Family Engagement strategy in Section (C)(4), providers will engage families around the standards through the incorporation of ELDS in parent-teacher conferences, through "social" events where families can learn about how the program promotes children's learning via the standards, and generally through utilizing the standards as a hook for more robust communication and relationship-building between families and programs.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

6. Train providers in the effective implementation and use of new standards and support materials: Spring 2013 – Summer 2014, OSSE

Milestone a. Develop and launch paper-based, in-person, and online training: Summer 2013, contractor under OSSE

Milestone b. Hold first quarterly training meeting: Fall 2013, OSSE

Milestone c. Hold second quarterly training meeting: Fall 2013, OSSE

Milestone d. Hold third quarterly training meeting: Winter 2014, OSSE

Milestone e. Hold fourth quarterly training meeting: Spring 2014, OSSE

Milestone f. On-site support providers complete coaching training: Summer 2014, OSSE

7. Educate families about the new ELDS: Fall 2013 – Summer 2014, OSSE

Milestone a. Develop and disseminate online and hard-copy materials for families and other stakeholders: Fall 2013, OSSE

Milestone b. Providers host family engagement events around the standards: Spring 2014 and ongoing, Publicly funded ELDPs

(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.

The State has elected to respond to selection criteria C1, C3 and C4 only.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

Additionally, States must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measures under (C)(3)(d).

Evidence for (C)(3)(a):

- To the extent the State has established a progression of health standards across the levels of Program Standards that meet the elements in criterion (C)(3)(a), submit--
 - The progression of health standards used in the Program Standards and the State's plans for improvement over time, including documentation demonstrating that this progression of standards appropriately addresses health and safety standards; developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up; health promotion including healthy eating habits, improved nutrition, and increased physical activity; oral health; and social and emotional development; and health literacy among parents and children;

Evidence for (C)(3)(b):

- To the extent the State has existing and projected numbers and percentages of Early Childhood Educators who receive training and support in meeting the health standards, the State shall submit documentation of these data. If the State does not have these data, the State shall outline its plan for deriving them.

Evidence for (C)(3)(d):

- Documentation of the State's existing and future resources that are or will be used to address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs. At a minimum, documentation must address the screening, referral, and follow-up of all Children with High Needs; how the State will promote the participation of Children with High Needs in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care; how the State will promote healthy eating habits and improved nutrition as well as increased physical activity for Children with High Needs; and how the State will promote health literacy for children and parents.

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

In the third edition of *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs* ("Health and Safety Guidelines," 2011), it is emphasized that health and safety best practices are important to providing quality early learning and care for children. This includes formulating standards that are respectful of the different developmental needs and functional status of children, including those with disabilities; respect for children's diverse backgrounds; promotion of healthy family-child relationships; attention to nutritional needs; and the necessity of access to high quality medical care in or out of early learning and development facilities (AAP, pp. xix-xx).

The District's health and safety standards for early childhood education and care providers exemplify many of these traits. In the past five years, DC has put a great deal of focus on

ensuring the health and safety of children across all early learning and development programs, including health and fitness education standards. In 2007, DC amended Title 29 of the DC Municipal Regulations to update the regulations on child development facilities, both home-based and center-based (see Appendix C3.1). These standards are included in DC's QRIS that establish a floor above which all early learning and development providers must stay to receive and maintain licensing (C)(3)(a).

The District has also taken aggressive actions to promote healthy lifestyles across early learning and K-12 programs. In 2008 comprehensive standards addressing health education and physical education were adopted that include theoretical background knowledge (e.g., why good nutrition and exercise are important) as well as practical applications (e.g., selecting healthy foods at a restaurant) (C)(3)(a) and (C)(3)(c).

To support the ELDS, health and safety standards, and promote ongoing engagement with new methods and research, licensed early childhood educators in the District are required to complete continuing education (CE)/professional development training each year. In fiscal year 2011, 252 training opportunities were offered with 3,752 participants (C)(3)(b). Additionally, Early Stages, part of DC's Early Intervention Program (DC EIP), will roll-out a new training program in fiscal year 2012 for child care centers that will teach them to do developmental screenings for children 0-5 as part of the Child Find process to reach children outside of school-based programs (C)(3)(b).

Finally, in 2010 the DC Department of Mental Health and DC Department of Health rolled out the Healthy Futures Program, which serves children birth to age five to promote positive social and emotional development (C)(3)(c) and (C)(3)(d). This program is funded in part by a grant through Project LAUNCH, a grant program of the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration that is funded through September 2014.

The table below indicates the alignment of DC's accomplishments and plan with the selection criteria for (C)(3):

Table C3.1 Alignment of Accomplishments and Plan with Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	DC Accomplishments	High-Quality Plan Strategies		
		Strategy D: Update health standards	Strategy E: Provide professional development and resources	Strategy F: Create data sharing mechanism
(C)(3)(a) Progressive health & safety standards	✓	•		
(C)(3)(b) Ongoing educator training in health standards	✓		•	
(C)(3)(c) Promotion of healthy lifestyles	✓	•	•	
(C)(3)(d) Leveraging resources to increase services to Children with High Needs				•

Goals

- By 2013, engage in a process of aligning and updating all health standards, guidelines and regulations that impact Early Childhood Education in the District.
- By 2015, train at least 85% of all instructional staff of licensed providers on health standards and best practices for implementation.
- By 2015, increase the overall percent of children screened before Kindergarten by 13 percentile points. (specific performance measures related to this goal appear in Table (C)(3)(d)).

Strategies

Strategy D. Align and update comprehensive health standards for all licensed programs. (C)(3)(a), (C)(3)(c)

Strategy E. Provide professional development and resources to instructional staff to improve implementation of comprehensive health standards.

(C)(3)(b)

Strategy F. Create a data-sharing mechanism between agencies. (C)(3)(d)

The District's reform agenda calls for focus on infant and toddler services/programs, promoting school readiness, mapping and alignment of standards, activities and resources, and better training for early childhood personnel. The above strategies are essential for assisting the accomplishment of these goals—better standards plus better training and access to data equals healthier, school-ready children.

Accomplishments

Progressive Health & Safety Standards Across Programs (C)(3)(a)

As mentioned above, Title 29 was updated in 2007 in part to more comprehensively address health and safety standards across all early learning and development programs. These standards are comprehensive and are closely aligned with the *Health and Safety Guidelines* (2011) published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association, and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education.

These standards are reiterated in the DC QRIS for early learning and development programs (Category 6: Nutrition and Wellness), making them an integral part of the tiered rating system for providers (see section B). Something that further strengthens the standards for early childhood learning and development programs is the Local Wellness Policy for DCPS, currently under revision. The Local Wellness Policy necessarily includes school-based early learning programs and ensures that children receive appropriate nutrition (to prevent obesity and malnutrition), nutrition and physical fitness education, and opportunities to engage in physical activity.

Physical Fitness Promotion

In 2008, the State Board of Education (SBOE) adopted comprehensive physical fitness standards for children from Pre-K through 12th grade. These standards focus on developing fine and gross motor skills, rhythmic movement, fitness concepts and body composition, self-responsibility and

social interaction. The District recognizes there is often a relationship between children with high needs and a lack of physical activity, sometimes due to health issues but also related to the accessibility of safe outdoor spaces in which to play. By incorporating the physical fitness standards into the PreK-12 curriculum, which are aligned with recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education, and DC's Department of Health Center for Policy, Planning and Epidemiology, the District is promoting healthy habits and development and providing a safe spaces for children to be physically active.

Ongoing Educator Training in Health Standards (C)(3)(b)

All licensed staff in early childhood programs in the District must provide evidence that they are receiving specialized training via continuing education and professional development (CE/PD) activities. The training must be provided through the Division of Early Childhood Education in OSSE or by organizations or individuals approved by OSSE, regionally accredited colleges/universities, or organizations authorized by the International Association for Continuing Education & Training, NAEYC, or National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

DC licensing standards require that a minimum of 18 hours of CE/PD training are completed by all instructional staff each year (bronze level); under the QRIS standards, instructional staff working in silver level programs need a minimum of 24 hour hours, and staff in gold level programs need a minimum of 30 hours. In fiscal year 2011, 252 trainings were held covering one or more of the core knowledge areas for early childhood educators (see section D for details on core knowledge), with 98 of these programs specifically addressing core knowledge areas related to health and wellness. Overall, there were 3,752 participants in all trainings. To make training accessible to educators of varying linguistic backgrounds or who are working in programs serving particular linguistic populations, 26 of the 43 approved training organizations offer training programs in languages other than English, including American Sign Language. Last fiscal year, 16 training programs were held in Spanish and four in Amharic.

DC is one of 24 states, tribes and local communities to receive a Project LAUNCH grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Project Launch seeks to promote the wellness of young children birth to age eight by improving the systems that serve

young children and address their physical, emotional, social, cognitive and behavioral growth. Project LAUNCH funding has allowed for extensive training of mental health consultants who serve 28 child development centers through several evidence-based projects, such as Incredible Years, Parents as Teachers, Effective Black Parenting, The Ohio Scales, and Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, among others. These consultants work with and train early childhood educators in classroom management, individual child behaviors, and program policies about socio-emotional issues and provide general support to help educators monitor socio-emotional development.

Finally, the Division of Special Education, Training and Technical Assistance unit at OSSE has been providing professional development training to the early childhood community since the 2009-10 school year. Five hundred trainings have been offered, focusing on research and evidence-based instructional and developmental suggestions to help ECEs establish and manage high-quality preschool environments for students and families with increasingly diverse needs. These PD opportunities have been available to all ELDPs across the District and have included specific training opportunities for ELDP administrators to help them devise and implement highly effective management systems to monitor and support their teachers and staff. Over 100 administrators participated in these trainings.

Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles (C)(3)(c)

In addition to the physical education standards and Local Wellness Policy mentioned above, the District has also enacted comprehensive health education standards for PreK-12 children in 2008. The standards are aimed at promoting understanding of how bodies grow and develop, respect for one's health, research and use of valid and reliable sources of health information, and incorporation of health-related knowledge into everyday behavior.

Screening, Referral, and Follow Up of Children with High Needs (C)(3)(d)

All state-funded programs and Early Head Start/Head Start programs located within the District are required to administer developmental, behavioral, and sensory screenings, referral, and follow-up. All preschoolers and Kindergarteners in Early Head Start/Head Start DCPS-based Title 1 schools were screened in 2009 and 2010 (about 6,800 children combined). This means

that nearly 40% of the age 3-5 population in the District has received a developmental screening as a result of the DCPS Head Start School-wide Model; this trend is expected to continue.

Given that the District is home to roughly 117,000 children, over 46% of whom are enrolled in Medicaid and 14.7% have special health care needs, the District has also been working to improve the provision of health-related services.

IDEA Part C

In the past two years, the District has increased the number of children served under IDEA Part C by 30%. Much of this increase is due to the establishment of interagency partnerships between DHCF, CFSA, Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCO), and Early Head Start through memorandums of agreement (MOAs). These MOAs provided for the creation of a new database to ensure accurate tracking of children and services, and can be accessed by all MCOs, IDEA Part C evaluation providers and staff and service coordinators. Another database housing completed Ages and Stages Questionnaires is used by various service providers, including DOH, DMH, Howard University Hospital and others. Furthermore, all contractors (200+) who provide services under IDEA Part C in the District were trained in the new evidence-based screening and diagnostic tools used to evaluate children. The training model was developed in partnership with Georgetown University and has also been opened to IDEA Part B providers who work with preschool-age children.

A companion effort for improving the identification, screening and referral of children with high needs are the evidence-based parent training model programs that have been implemented in the District. IDEA Part C service providers train parents in natural environments (e.g., community-based settings or homes) on various issues related to their high-needs children.

Finally, the DC EIP improved its standing with the Office of Special Education Programs at the US Department of Education in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2011, moving from a determination of “needs intervention” to “needs assistance.” The improvement is expected to continue in the current FFY. The increased rating reflects a concentrated effort in DC to fill gaps in the provision of services and to continue to strive for a more efficient, less cumbersome system for service delivery.

IDEA Part B

The District has improved markedly in its provision of services under IDEA Part B over the past FFY. The District has established a 120-day timeframe within which initial evaluations of children with high needs must be conducted, and for FFY2009, 75.43% of initial evaluations were completed within the 120-day window—a significant improvement over the previous FFY (2008), in which only 66.56% were completed within the timeframe.

OSSE regularly monitors all LEAs for compliance with IDEA Part B 120-day timeframe. Reports are issued to all LEAs quarterly on their status (compliant or not compliant), and they are given up to one year to remedy each finding of noncompliance. Part of this monitoring process includes site visits to verify information—annually in DCPS, and every three years at each DCPCS.

Socio-emotional Screening and Support

In addition to these accomplishments, the District has begun to place increased emphasis on mental health and behavioral screening of young children. Recognizing that community-based programs have had notable success in addressing these issues (RAND, 2009), the District has launched a series of new initiatives. The Healthy Futures Program discussed above is a program aimed at increasing the number of children screened for early identification of socio-emotional concerns, with the companion mandate to train teachers and administrators on accessing mental health resources for their students and providing crisis intervention services and support to early learning program staff. To date, the program has placed early childhood mental health clinicians in 28 child development and early Head Start centers across the District, including four located within the Parkside-Kenilworth Promise Neighborhood (see below).

The DC Promise Neighborhoods Initiative

A report by RAND on health and health care suggests that high-risk communities could benefit from “interventions that are place-based or that focus on developing community-level wellness opportunity zones” (2009, p. 130). Under the Department of Education’s Promise Neighborhood grant program, the Parkside-Kenilworth community in the District’s Ward 7 has been established as a Promise Neighborhood and seeks to create a “wellness opportunity zone” for children.

DCPNI includes a comprehensive place-based initiative known as the Early Learning Network (ELN), which will organize provider members, parents, and technical support providers to ensure seamless and non-duplicative coverage for pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, particularly from the highest risk families. The ELN is being coordinated by Fight for Children, a DC non-profit organization highly regarded for its advocacy of children living in high-risk neighborhoods. The network includes a wide range of providers such as school-based early learning programs, family childcare homes, and community-based childcare centers. By December 2011, it will include all home visiting programs in the District; and by 2012 it will begin to include providers located outside the Parkside-Kenilworth community who serve children living within Parkside-Kenilworth, and reach out to support unlicensed providers. OSSE and DCPNI have established a MOU, which DCPNI recognizes as a vital component of the strategic plan to improve outcomes for all children from birth to third grade. OSSE will assign representatives from its programmatic units, particularly from the Division of Early Childhood Education and the DC EIP/Part C to serve as key points of contact to the ELN.

Project LAUNCH

The District has also developed a strategic plan to guide the implementation of the rest of Project LAUNCH. The development process involved stakeholders from over fifteen public and private organizations and programs. The DC Council on Young Child Wellness (DC CYCW) was established to take the leadership, consisting of members from the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Steering Committee and the DC Head Start Health Services Committee (in order to prevent duplication of services). As part of their work, an environmental scan was conducted to map out the systems and programs (including Federal and private grants) that serve children from birth to age eight and their families. Using the information gleaned from this scan, DC CYCW formulated a strategic plan to carry the Project LAUNCH process through 2014. The rationale of the plan is to a) ensure children's health, wellness, and education needs are met, including appropriate screening; b) prevent duplication of services; c) facilitate opportunities for professional development and family engagement; and to do all of this through d) the creation of an effective, inclusive and collaborative governance structure for the early childhood community.

High-Quality Plan for (C)(3)

Strategy D. Align and update comprehensive health standards for all licensed programs. (C)(3)(a) and (C)(3)(c)

Though the District has a variety of standards, policies and regulations addressing health standards and wellness promotion, there is a need for purposeful alignment among them. There currently exists a mixed bag of tools and resources that, while promoting the same ends, can create confusion and lack of clarity in what is expected of providers, what services are available to families and what agencies are working to promote health, wellness and safety. To create a more streamlined, accessible and purposeful integration of policies, regulations and standards, the District will provide a mechanism for review and alignment. This will be a transparent process, and include input from all LEAs, private schools, and other stakeholders in the District.

Activity 8: Convene a workgroup to examine, align and update policies, regulations and standards for Early Childhood providers related to health and wellness.

This activity would expand the scope of DC CYCW to examine existing Health and PE curricular standards, licensing policies and regulations, Program Standards, standards for Early Intervention and Child Find. Recommendations will be funneled through DHS, DOH, OSSE, and the SECDCC, as appropriate. To ensure continuity across all types of early learning and development programs, it is to be understood that though indicators will vary by program type, the health, safety and wellness standards will remain constant. Stated another way, all ELDPs will be held to the same high standards regarding child health and wellness; the method through which they meet those standards may differ.

Children with high needs will be particularly benefitted by this alignment work, as the workgroup will be tasked with examining Child Find (Strong Start and Early Stages, Parts C and B) to determine crossovers with other health and wellness policies and will make recommendations for alignment and strengthening of these programs within the District. This work will go hand-in-hand with the work already being conducted by DC CYCW and is essential for closing gaps, preventing duplication of services, and identifying the multiple entry points for access to services.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

8. Convene a workgroup to examine, align and update policies, regulations and standards for Early Childhood providers related to health and wellness: Summer 2012 – Spring 2013, DOH, DMH, DHCF

Milestone a. Add new mandate for examining existing programs, policies and standards and making recommendations to the DC CYCW: Summer 2012, DOH, DMH, DHCF

Milestone b. Make recommendations to DHS, DOH, OSSE, and the SECDCC: Spring 2013, DOH, DMH, DHCF

Strategy E. Provide professional development and resources to instructional staff to improve implementation of comprehensive health standards. (C)(3)(b) and (C)(3)(c)

While Pre-K students are being reached through the Health and Physical Fitness curriculum standards and the *Healthy Schools Act* (which applies to DCPS, DCPCS, and private schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program), there is less curricular support in the area of healthy lifestyles for toddlers. While there are health and safety standards included in the ELDS for infants and toddlers, these are more representative of developmental milestones rather than robust materials to aid planning instructional activities and materials to promote healthy practices in children this age. Professional development related to implementation of comprehensive health standards will cover all ages, 0 to 5, but a special emphasis will be placed on toddlers. The DC Chapter of the American Association of Pediatrics has indicated that it will be a willing and enthusiastic partner in the process of redesigning the training to help ensure that it is aligned with the health standards.

Activity 9: Develop and implement online modules and in-person trainings to facilitate the effective use of comprehensive health standards, policy and regulation in Early Learning and Development Programs.

Once standards and policies have been aligned, the District will take advantage of the opportunity to present the aligned standards, guidance and suggested resources to Early Childhood Educators statewide. By 2015, at least 85% of all instructional staff of licensed providers will participate in training (on paper, in person, or through an online module) related to the implementation of standards, policies and protocols, as well as use of materials and resources

available to promote health and wellness education in early childhood settings. Trainings will be designed in conjunction with medical professionals from the DC Chapter of the American Association of Pediatrics and will include a job-embedded element through which participants receive feedback on a lesson segment related to the standards. Furthermore, training on the *Standards Entry Points* manual will be integrated into this training as well, including on ramps and differentiated strategies for bringing all students to standard in the area of health and wellness.

Online and paper-based training will be available to all providers, and in-person training will be held at locations in each ward in the District (again, at various times to facilitate maximum cumulative participation). Meetings will not exceed 20 participants, to allow for maximum interaction with the facilitator.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

9. Develop online and in-person training on revised/updated standards and guidelines: Fall 2014 – Spring 2015, OSSE, DOH, DMH, DHCF

Milestone a. Develop informational flyers, online module and curriculum for in-person training: Fall 2014, OSSE or contractor under OSSE

Milestone b. Launch training module and in-person training programs: Winter 2015, OSSE, DOH, DMH, DHCF

Milestone c. 85% of instructional staff complete training: Spring 2015, OSSE, DOH, DMH, DHCF

Strategy F. Create a data-sharing mechanism between agencies. (C)(3)(d)

The District has a number of sources for storing and accessing data related to health, such as the Immunization Registry, Lead Screening Registry, and the TB Registry. DC also provides multiple ways for children to receive developmental, behavioral, and sensory screenings (via the DC EIP (OSSE), Ages and Stages Questionnaire, CFSA, child development centers, and an online tool parents can use at home). However, there is a notable lack of clear, consistent, and available data on children's health. None of the above databases and tools "speak" to one another, and there is no regular District-wide surveillance of children's health.

Furthermore, the lack of consistently collected data on children's health, access to healthcare, or community feedback on existing programs makes it difficult for health care providers and policymakers to accurately gauge what is needed to promote the health and wellness of all District children.

Activity 10: Develop and adopt a health data sharing mechanism.

The lack of communication between databases and tools has led to duplicative, uncoordinated screenings or, for some children, no screenings at all. The District recognizes the need to address this issue, not only to create a more streamlined and efficient screening process but, more importantly, to prevent children from falling through the cracks.

A data sharing mechanism, consistent with HIPAA, would allow agencies to track immunizations, screenings, exposure to lead or TB and other information that would assist in identifying duplication or gaps in services. Furthermore, it could provide a basis for providing better information to healthcare providers, as it would centralize the information that could be accessed quickly and easily with the appropriate consent from parents or guardians. All of this leads to a better provision of essential health-related services to children.

The Department of Health will take the lead on this activity, in partnership with CFSA and DHCF. Necessary consultants will be hired to build a database that is able to integrate information from various current databases and able to accept entries from health providers citywide. Work on this system will begin in Spring 2012 and will be completed by Winter 2014.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

10. Develop and adopt a health data sharing mechanism: Spring 2012 – Winter 2014, DOH, CFSA, DHCF

Milestone a. Identify the specific needs of each agency and compile a comprehensive list of existing data, sources and users/potential users: Spring 2012, Vendor under DOH

Milestone b. Launch new mechanism and associated tutorials for users: Winter 2014, DOH, CFSA, DHCF

Performance Measures for (C)(3)(d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual statewide targets.					
	<i>Baseline and annual targets</i>				
	Baseline (Today, if known) <i>If unknown please use narrative to explain plan for defining baseline and setting and meeting annual targets</i>	Target for end of calendar year 2012	Target for end of calendar year 2013	Target for end of calendar year 2014	Target for end of calendar year 2015
Number of Children with High Needs screened	23,934 (76% of eligible)	24,863 (79% of eligible)	25,808 (83% of eligible)	27,067 (86% of eligible)	28,011 (89% of eligible)
Number of Children with High Needs referred for services who received follow-up/treatment	Tracking referrals and the receipt of needed follow-up/ treatment is a fragmented process in the District. The Medicaid agency can track the receipt of specialty and treatment services through claims but has no way of knowing if a referral was made. Other resources such as Child Find receive referrals and can track internally whether or not needed follow-up care was received, but currently there is no over-arching coordination or tracking system. One overall aim of our work in DC is to develop a coordinated model that allows for more effective tracking and monitoring of the needs and care of children with high needs.				
Number of Children with High Needs who participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well child care	23,934 (76% of eligible)	24,863 (79% of eligible)	25,808 (83% of eligible)	27,067 (86% of eligible)	28,011 (89% of eligible)
Of these participating children, the number or percentage of children who are up-to-date in a schedule of well	97%	97%	98%	98%	99%

child care					
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Throughout this table Children with High Needs are defined as children aged birth to five who are eligible for Medicaid and continuously enrolled for at least 90 days. In DC, approximately 60% of all children under 18 are covered by public insurance and the majority of these children are covered by Medicaid.

According to the FY2009 EPSDT report to CMS, DC had 32,418 children, birth-age 5, who were eligible for Medicaid services.

Number of Children with High Needs screened: This baseline is an actual number from the FY2010 EPSDT report to CMS (CMS Form-416). The baseline represents all children, birth to age 5, who are eligible for Medicaid and enrolled for at least 90 days in FY10 who received at least one initial or periodic screen during FY2010. This represents 76% of the total eligible population who received screening.

Baselines for 2012-2015 were based on increasing the total percentage of eligible children screened by 3% per year to a total of 89% screened by the end of calendar year 2015. According to the FY2010 report, 90% of eligible infants (<1 year) received screening, 80% of eligible 1-2 year olds received screening and 90% of eligible 3-5year olds received screening. The 89% overall target by 2015 necessitates a focus on raising screening among eligible 1-5 year olds and holding constant the rate of screening among eligible infants. DC believes that this represents an ambitious yet achievable goal, especially when reviewing performance across prior years.

Number of Children with High Needs referred for services who received follow-up/treatment: See above.

Number of Children with High Needs who participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well child care: The data reflected in this line mirrors the data reported in the “Number of Children with High Needs Screened” because all of the reported screenings were conducted within the context of well child care visits. Given the very high screening ratios the District already displays, there should not be any significant difference in the number of children screened and in the number of children receiving ongoing well child care.

Of these participating children, the number or percentage of children who are up-to-date in a schedule of well child care: The baseline data reported is the actual screening ratio for the age groups in question as reported on the FY2010 CMS-416 report. The screening ratio measures the degree to which the appropriate numbers of screens were received by beneficiaries. In FY10, the District reported a 97% screening ratio for the 0-5 age groups. Given the high baseline, only very modest increases are expected over the next five years.

(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.

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

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

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

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

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)(4)(a):

- To the extent the State has established a progression of family engagement standards across the levels of Program Standards that meet the elements in criterion (C)(4)(a), submit--
 - The progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate family engagement standards used in the Program Standards that includes strategies successfully used to engage families in supporting their children's development and learning. A State's family engagement standards must address, but need not be limited to: 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 adult and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development;
 - Documentation that this progression of standards includes activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development.

Evidence for (C)(4)(b):

- To the extent the State has existing and projected numbers and percentages of Early Childhood Educators who receive training and support on the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards, the State shall submit documentation of these data. If the State does not have these data, the State shall outline its plan for deriving them.

Evidence for (C)(4)(c):

- Documentation of the State’s existing resources that are or will be used to promote family support and engagement statewide, including through home visiting programs and other family-serving agencies and the identification of new resources that will be used to promote family support and engagement statewide.

(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families

It is well-recognized that the quality of family engagement in a child’s development and education is a critical factor in healthy development and achievement. The National PTA (2009) found that laws addressing eight essential components of systematic family engagement improve educational outcomes (p. 13). All of these components relate to early childhood programming as well as K-12, but the most directly focused on early childhood education are authorizing laws to support professional development for educators at all levels on family engagement strategies and establishing laws to support comprehensive “cradle to career” pathways for family engagement (p. 13). Additionally, the new Head Start Parent, Family and Community Engagement (HSPFCE) Framework (2011) emphasizes the importance of “a systematic, integrated and comprehensive approach to family engagement” (p. 2).

The District has addressed many of these essential components through legislation that has been codified (C)(4)(a). Specific indicators of family engagement practices are also included in the District’s QRIS (C)(4)(a) and (C)(4)(b). Home visitation programs across the District are robust, with seven different programs currently operating through various organizations, including the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services (C)(4)(a) and (C)(4)(c). The District has also implemented the DC Fatherhood Initiative (DCFI) to promote responsible parenting and stable families (C)(4)(a).

The table below indicates the alignment of DC’s accomplishments and plan with the selection criteria for (C)(4) [This table indicates that DC will be discussing accomplishments related to (C)(4)(a) and (C)(4)(b) and proposing plans related to all three criteria.]:

Table C4.1 Alignment of Accomplishments and Plan with Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	DC Accomplishments	High-Quality Plan Strategies	
		Strategy G: Develop training modules	Strategy H: Expand and coordinate services
(C)(4)(a) Establish standards for family engagement across Program Standards	✓		•
(C)(4)(b) Ongoing training in family engagement	✓	•	
(C)(4)(c) Promoting engagement through inter-agency collaboration/sharing of resources			•

Goals

- By 2012, DC will develop a comprehensive training system to ensure family engagement standards are implemented and maintained.
- By 2014, at least one representative from all licensed providers will complete the family engagement training module.
- By 2014, DC will leverage resources in order to streamline services and reinforce family engagement practices.

Strategies

Strategy G. Provide professional development for ELDPs on best practices for family engagement. (C)(4)(b)

Strategy H. Expand and coordinate services offered directly to families. (C)(4)(a) and (C)(4)(c)

These strategies support the overall reform agenda of the District through an emphasis on promoting school readiness and expanded services for infants and toddlers. Improved training in family engagement lends to the overall goal of better training for early childhood educators, thus working towards another of the reform goals. By improving the connections between families and early learning and development providers, the District supports positive child outcomes through parental involvement in their child's schooling and overall development.

Accomplishments

Family Engagement Standards (C)(4)(a)

As stated above, DC has already done substantial work to increase and promote family engagement across programs. The most notable of these accomplishments is the codification of family engagement policies for early learning and K-12 institutions, including labor laws that protect employees who have obligations with their child's school or child care facility. In addition to directing all LEAs, the school board, and the superintendent to include family engagement in all programming, OSSE was charged with developing ELDS and program standards that include "A plan to foster parental support and involvement" (PTA, 2009, p. 170). These codes are displayed in Appendix C4.1. Additionally, DC's QRIS includes measures of family engagement programming and activities at both center-based and home-based child care programs, as explained in Section B.

The District also has a robust home visitation system, comprised of seven different programs administered by various organizations. The programs are Mary's Center Healthy Start Healthy Families (HSHF), Healthy Families/Thriving Communities, Beyond Behaviors, HSC Home Care, the Department of Health's Healthy Start program, the Washington Hospital Center's (WHC) Healthy Foundations and the WHC's Teen Alliance for Prepared Parenting. Combined, these programs serve children from the prenatal stage through age 21, and include services for teen parents, single mothers, at-risk children and their families, children with special needs and ELLs.

Another program aimed at promoting family engagement is the DC Fatherhood Initiative (DCFI), mentioned above. Sponsored by the Department of Human Services, DCFI is a competitive grant program that awards funds to nonprofit, community and faith-based

organizations for the development and implementation of projects that support responsible parenting and stable families. The target populations for this program are residents with limited or no English proficiency, teen parents, and TANF-eligible, low-income, unemployed or under-employed parents.

The District also has a successful grant program to promote the development of family engagement programs across District Pre-K programs (school-based, center-based, or state/federally funded programs). The Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program Assistance Grants are two-year grants of up to \$25,000 each, with priority given to programs in high-risk Wards (5, 7 and 8). OSSE has awarded 43 of these grants over the past 2 years. In addition, the District offers Family Book Club grants for families in Wards 1, 5, 7, and 8 to promote family involvement in child literacy development.

Ongoing Training and Support (C)(4)(b)

As touched on in (C)(3), over 250 trainings were offered to early childhood professionals last fiscal year, covering all of the core knowledge areas. Of these trainings, 15 were focused specifically on family engagement, family support, or respect for diversity, including family structures, home languages, and cultures. An additional 22 were “multi-area” sessions that covered a several core knowledge areas at once, of which family engagement and support was a part.

High-Quality Plan for (C)(4)

Strategy G. Provide professional development for ELDPs on best practices for family engagement. (C)(4)(b)

The HSPFCE Framework emphasizes the need for continuous improvement of family engagement programs and initiatives and PD in family engagement (2011, p. 3). While family engagement is already infused in the QRIS program standards and the ELDS, more concentrated work must be done to ensure that providers are implementing the standards across all types of programs in the District. To this end, the Standards Committee will first align and streamline family engagement standards, and then partnering universities will develop online, paper-based, and face-to-face training opportunities, and a coach-training model will be implemented in order

to ensure training and implementation across all programs that includes ongoing coaching and support.

Activity 11: Map and crosswalk existing Family Engagement Standards for all Early Learning and Development Programs

Before an appropriate training module can be developed, OSSE must facilitate the mapping of the District’s existing Family Engagement Standards for all Early Learning and Development Programs. This information will then be used to create a crosswalk document vis-à-vis the activities listed in (C)(4). This will help identify any gaps, oversights and areas for improvement that exist and that should be addressed in the training modules. For example, the crosswalk may reveal that specific training is needed to improve ELDP engagement with the families of children in foster care (e.g., by offering specific guidance to families in nurturing children who have experienced trauma due to abuse and/or neglect). OSSE, CFSA, DHS, and DMH will complete this mapping and alignment work collaboratively.

Activity 12: Develop online, paper-based and face to face training opportunities for ECE professionals.

DC will leverage its collaborative relationships with local colleges and universities to develop objectives and outcomes for training opportunities. The RTT-ELC Higher Education Consortium, a group with representation from local higher education institutions, will meet in Winter 2012 to determine appropriate objectives and outcomes for such a training. OSSE will then contract with an appropriate number of higher education partners to fully develop and launch the training opportunities, to include online, paper-based and face-to-face training.

This process will include other stakeholders, including the Department of Mental Health, Child and Family Services Agency, the Office of Family and Public Engagement (DCPS) and representatives from all ELDP types across the District. Parents will also be invited to participate in the process, adding their valuable insight as “consumers” to the shape and focus of the training, and to act as ambassadors to other parents in the community. When crafting the module, careful attention will also be paid to include information about working with families in poverty, families whose home language is not English, families with children that have special needs, and families with children in foster care. In addition, significant attention will be paid to the needs of

families transitioning between child care providers or transitioning to schools. The time when a child is transitioning from one stage of education to another, such as from daycare to Pre-K, from Pre-K to Kindergarten, etc., can be a very stressful and confusing time for families. Children have to adjust to new environments and people, and parents need to feel comfortable with the new environment their child is entering and be aware of what they should expect. Additionally, providers and schools need to be ready for the children who are coming to them. Offering training opportunities for providers, instructors, parents, program directors or school administrators on ways to manage these transitional periods is an additional way for the District to support young children and their families.

Higher education institutions, as part of this work, will also be encouraged to link their coursework for early childhood education to the professional development expectations to ensure aligned teacher development and decrease the burden on teachers enrolled in degree programs.

Activity 13: Train one coach from each licensed provider in family engagement strategies.

A coach training model will be used to ensure proper implementation and ongoing coaching and support of the family engagement standards. As mentioned in (C)(1), this model is effective because it empowers providers to customize knowledge and skills to fit the populations they serve and the structure of their program. One representative from each licensed provider will participate in a specialized coaching training offered by partnering higher education institutions; those who receive direct training are expected to return to their program and work collaboratively with staff to design a family engagement plan with activities, timeline and persons responsible.

The training will be offered at partnering universities across the District, and at least two face-to-face meetings will be required in which participants will be able to put their theoretical knowledge and skills into practice. After initial training, follow up oversight and support will be provided through the QRIS process outlined in Section B, as well as ongoing professional development activities for instructional staff described in Section D.

Activity 14: Expand the Centers for Excellence and Family Provider Peer Network.

Model site for family engagement-related professional development will be established throughout the District through the Centers for Excellence and Family Provider Peer Network described in (B)(4). At these Centers for Excellence or Family Provider Peer Network sites, professional development opportunities and intensive support will be provided in the implementation of the engagement standards. These sites will become places where other early childhood professionals can visit to “see” how the standards and information are implemented with children and families.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

11. Map and crosswalk existing family engagement standards in all early learning programs: Fall 2012 – Winter 2013, OSSE, CFSA, DHS and DMH

12. Develop online, paper-based and face-to-face training opportunities for ECE professionals: Winter 2013 – Summer 2013, OSSE, RTT-ELC Higher Education Consortium

Milestone a. Engage with local higher education institutions: Winter 2013, OSSE

13. Train one coach from each licensed provider in family engagement strategies: Spring 2013 – Summer 2013, OSSE, partner colleges/universities

Milestone a. One representative from each provider completes hybrid training module: Summer 2013, OSSE, partner colleges/universities

14. Establish Centers for Excellence and the Family Provider Peer Network: Fall 2013 – ongoing, OSSE

Milestone a. 5 centers and 5 family child care providers are selected to serve in leadership roles: Winter 2014, OSSE

Milestone b. Model ELDPs begin sharing sessions: Summer 2014, OSSE

Strategy H. Expand and coordinate services offered directly to families. (C)(4)(a), (C)(4)(c)

The District’s reform agenda includes placing special emphasis on services for infants and toddlers (and their families) and getting children ready for school. Engaging families in this

process is essential for success. Many organizations and agencies in DC interact with families to provide support to the home environment where young children are being raised. In an effort to promote family support and engagement state-wide, the District will work to develop a coordinated system for services across agencies and providers, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies and through outreach to family, friend and neighbor caregivers.

Activity 15: Create a universal screening and referral process for all parents of newborns who are District residents to ensure that families who receive home visiting programs are those that most need and are receiving appropriate support.

To increase capacity and develop a sustainable program of in-home support for families, DOH will use *What Works for Home Visiting Programs: Lessons from Experimental Evaluations of Programs and Interventions* (Khan, J. & Moore, K.A., 2010), to inform needs. DOH will collaborate with DHS, OSSE, DMH and CFSA to formalize intake and recruitment to match families to appropriate home visitation services. Starting as a pilot program in targeted Wards (5, 7 and 8), using existing home visiting programs administered by DOH, full implementation District-wide will begin in Fall 2014 and will include home visiting programs administered by other agencies and providers.

Activity 16: Develop an online system for managing and tracking services across agencies and providers.

To provide more effective support to families who are seeking services and supports in order to increase their self-sufficiency and provide better futures for their children, DHS, in collaboration with the District's other health and human service agencies, is leading a systematic redesign of how District agencies interact with and serve families. Starting with the TANF program, which is one of the main interaction points with low-income families and families with children with high needs, DHS is mapping and implementing an integrated and coordinated service delivery model for families to better serve families and increase the effectiveness of the District's investments in families and their children.

At the heart of this new system is the recognition that to truly put families at the center, government agencies need to rethink their role in supporting families. Often, government

agencies focus on the “services” that families need, and see these services as what families need to solve their problems. In reality, families and communities, even those facing significant challenges, are resilient and have access to many different types of resources and supports that go well beyond what a public agency alone can provide. This “circle of support” recognizes that the stronger the support systems that are more naturally part of a family’s community support system, such as extended family, places of worship, community groups, schools, and work, the less likely it is that the family will need higher-cost, and more intrusive, government services, such as foster care or the juvenile justice system. In other words, each “level of support” is a prevention program for the ones that follow.

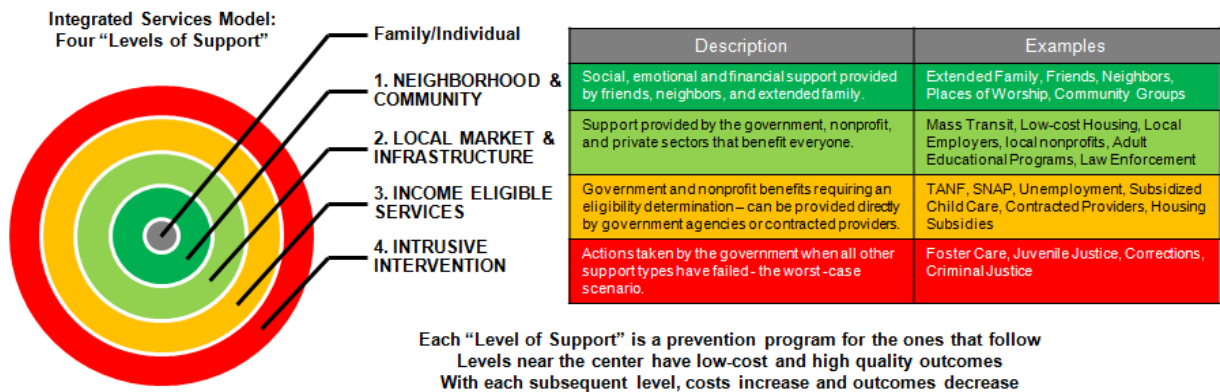


Figure C4.1 Circle of Support Model

To truly put the family at the center, the pool of services they access must be comprehensive and cohesive. As DHS continues to map the redesign of the coordinated service delivery model, it is also rolling out the first phase of this model beginning October 1, 2011, with certain TANF recipients and those agencies that have completed the preliminary mapping. Families served through the new coordinated services model will be a part of developing and driving the plans and selecting the services that will work for them. Families that receive services from multiple agencies now will have the option of unifying their “plans”. This will allow a family to choose who they want to take the lead with them as the case coordinator or case manager, and allow the family to count the work they do to achieve the goals and requirements of one plan to count, to the extent feasible, toward the goals and requirements of the other plans. Thus, unifying and

coordinating family “plans” across agencies will utilize each agency’s expertise and minimize duplication of agency effort and negative impact on family of multiple agency involvement.

The system will do the following:

- (1) Create robust entry points for families that can quickly determine eligibility for multiple programs in multiple sectors, e.g., public welfare benefits, medical assistance, child care, head start and other education-based support programs;
- (2) Allow for cross-agency access to individual and family demographic and service delivery information to support unified case management and integrated service delivery;
- (3) Seek to unify eligibility and data capturing systems cross agency that also allows for the cross-identification of children, siblings, and adult family members across systems, and
- (4) Create a system-wide security protocol and monitoring that appropriately allows access to providers and agencies in order to coordinate provision of services and supports yet ensures the integrity and confidentiality of confidential consumer information.

To maximize the ability of families, regardless of their entry point, to determine which programs and services they are eligible for and utilize the coordinated services options, the District is creating a robust entry point/s for families that can quickly determine eligibility for multiple programs in multiple sectors, e.g., public welfare benefits, medical assistance, child care, head start and other education-based support programs. To support the data and information sharing necessary to creating coordinated eligibility and service delivery systems, the District passed the Data-Sharing and Information Coordination Amendment Act of 2010. Developed in coordination with the Mayor, the District’s health and human services agencies and the Council of the District of Columbia, this law gives agencies the authority they need to share in intra-government agency communications family information for the purpose of coordinating services and making eligibility determinations. Using the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) as the standard for sharing confidential information within the government, this legislation allows DHS to now create the information technology system that will facilitate and support the integrated services system that the District is creating.

The core data portal will be developed as part of the DHS Customer Access, Reporting and Eligibility System (DC CARES), which will replace ACEDS, the District’s current single entry

point to Medicaid, CHIP, SNAP, TANF, child care subsidy, and other Federal and District programs. The DC CARES, in addition to providing integrated eligibility for the core public benefit programs listed above, will be able to be configured to do eligibility determinations for additional Federal and District programs and services, such as those identified by the State Early Childhood Development Coordinating Council. The DC CARES capacity will significantly contribute to the development of delivering services which, to the customer, will be fluid, easy-to access, and conducive to the family-centered approach that the District is creating.

Activity 17: Consolidate home visitation funding streams and maximize federal revenue opportunities to better maximize dollars spent on home visiting.

Estimates place the amount of money spent each year on home visitation programs across the District at over \$6 million. Of this sum, an estimated \$3.78 million comes from state or federal funding streams directed to two programs (the DOH Healthy Start programs and Beyond Behaviors program funded by CFSA). Pooling resources into a common stream and examining possibilities for utilizing other federal funds for home visitation programs will help the District to expand the breadth of home visiting services and prevent duplication of services.

The DME will conduct a full study of funding streams and specific services offered in order to streamline home visitation programs and coordinate services. This work will include investigating strategies for centralizing/coordinating recruitment and professional training costs for home visiting staff, conducting a fiscal impact statement to determine the costs of increasing home visitation programs and writing a Medicaid waiver or SPA to allow for Medicaid reimbursement of home visitation services to children who are eligible for Medicaid. The SECDCC will serve in an advisory role to this work.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

15. Create and implement a universal screening and referral process for home visitation services for new parents: Summer 2012 – Fall 2014, DOH, CFSA, DHCF

Milestone a. Create a workgroup with representatives from all home visitation programs and stakeholder agencies: Summer 2012, DOH, CFSA, DHCF

Milestone b. Develop the universal screening and referral/home visitation program: Summer 2013, DOH, CFSA, DHCF

Milestone c. Launch the universal screening and referral home visitation program in Wards 5, 7 and 8: Fall 2013, DOH, CFSA, DHCF

Milestone d. Launch the program District-wide: Fall 2014, DOH, CFSA, DHCF

16. Develop an online system for managing and tracking services across agencies and providers: Winter 2013 – Summer 2014, Contractor under DHS, with DOH, CFSA, DMH, and DHCF partnering

Milestone a. Hire contractor to develop online service tracking tool: Winter 2013, DHS

Milestone b. Develop and launch pilot of the online tool: Spring 2013, DHS, DOH, CFSA, DMH, DHCF

Milestone c. Address any issues identified in the pilot and prepare for full implementation: Summer 2013, DHS, DOH, CFSA, DMH, DHCF

Milestone d. Full implementation of the online tool across all District programs: Fall 2014, DHS, DOH, CFSA, DMH, DHCF

17. Consolidate home visitation funding streams within legal boundaries (see Children's Budget process outlined in Section A) and maximize federal revenue opportunities to better maximize dollars spent on home visiting: Summer 2012 – Summer 2014, DME, with recommendations from SECDCC

Milestone. Produce draft report that outlines recommendations for streamlining funding sources and consolidating services: Summer 2013, DME

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) Development of a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.

Improving the practice of the early childhood educator is perhaps DC's most powerful method for ensuring that all children enter school Kindergarten-ready. Providing high quality professional development (PD), career pathways that keep all educators motivated and growing, and incentives for continuous improvement are all ways DC can support ECE development. With a comprehensive District-wide Professional Development Framework in place and draft Career Guide under review, DC has solid ground on which to build a revised Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework to improve those support mechanisms.

The Professionals Receiving Opportunities and Support Professional Development Plan (2009, see appendix D1.1) and draft Career Guide (see Appendix D1.2) will serve as guides for DC to solidify and expand PD opportunities for the 4,200 early childhood practitioners working in employer supported and/or sponsored programs. These programs include Head Start and Early Head Start, Family Child Care, District of Columbia Public Schools, DC Public Charter Schools, Community Based Early Care and Education Programs, In-Home and Relative Care programs and Out-of-School Time (OST) programs. The DC PROS PD Plan is the current framework that combines all PD programs, initiatives and efforts from a cross-sector of early childhood communities.

Specifically, the DC PROS provides detailed information on the knowledge and competencies early childhood educators should master, divided into eleven core knowledge areas. The DC PROS also provides a career lattice which has recently been updated and is now the draft Career Guide. The Career Guide begins with education levels from a high school diploma and offers levels through a Doctorate, as well as provides specialized professional tracks.

Though already a robust document, with the revision of the ELDS and QRIS, DC PROS and its accompanying Career Guide must also be brought into alignment with the needs of current centers, professionals, families and community-based interest groups. Further, there needs to be additional intentional work with higher education and PD provider groups to consider how to

align their institutional capacity and professionals to support the development of content offerings with the knowledge and skills needed for a highly effective ECE workforce.

DC has the document basis and a designed plan for tracking the progress of ECE professionals: a Professional Development Registry that will track ECE professionals as they gain credits toward degrees and “clock hours” toward licensing requirements and make information available to EDLPs so that the providers can ascertain their employees’ progress. DC monitors that each center has their teachers complete training for the required number of “clock hours,” but the content areas of that training is not targeted. Through QRIS review, each EDLP will be given specific areas of the 11 core knowledge areas on which their ECEs should focus their choice of training experiences. Currently, trainers who provide clock hour training must provide documentation that the courses they are providing align with the core knowledge areas that are described in detail later in this section. This alignment with program review will ensure that ECEs get a variety of high quality training opportunities in their areas of greatest need, which will assist in keeping center licenses current and ensure all adults working with children are trained in the essential elements of early learning and development.

DC will work to ensure that degrees and credentials relate to levels of increasing quality for ECE professionals. This will be accomplished by tracking teacher performance through the QRIS and the teacher observation tool that was described in Section B. Once documentation has been gathered and analyzed, there will be the opportunity to examine the relationship between teacher performance and Career Guide levels, degrees and credentials. Also, DC will establish high quality opportunities for PD across sectors that go beyond the basic training model. Through an incentive also linked to the QRIS, DC will allow for those centers that are participating in QRIS to apply for funds to provide training for ECE professionals in settings that are not currently available.

The following table below indicates the alignment of DC’s accomplishments and plan with (D)(1) selection criteria. [This table shows that DC has accomplishments in all three selection criteria and plans to expand and refine the work in each of these areas.]

Table D1.1 Alignment of Accomplishments and Plan with Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	DC Accomplishments	High-Quality Plan Strategies		
		Strategy A: Update Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework	Strategy B: Implementation Plan for Career Guide	Strategy C: Alignment of Higher Ed Offerings
(D)(1)(a) Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework	✓	•		
(D)(1)(b) Progression of Credentials and Degrees	✓		•	
(D)(1)(c) Postsecondary and PD provider alignment with Framework	✓			•

Goals

- By 2012, implement an updated, clear and publically available Framework of Early Childhood Workforce Knowledge and Competency for Early Child Educators working with children from ages 0-5
- By 2013, implement a career guide that is aligned with local and national standards
- By 2014, verify that teacher preparation programs that prepare Early Childhood Educators are based on outcomes that align with the updated Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework

Strategies

Strategy A. Design an updated, clear, publicly available Framework of Early Childhood Workforce Knowledge and Competency for working with children from ages 0-5 (D)(1)(a)

Strategy B. Develop an implementation plan for the Career Guide (D)(1)(b)

Strategy C. Expand outreach to higher education institutions and professional development providers to ensure alignment of programs with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework D(1)(c)

The strategies for (D)(1) align with DC's reform agenda outlined in Section A. Strategies A and C align with the reform strategy to map and align DC's plans, activities and resources to identify any gaps in services. Through the development of a Framework that fully describes what children from ages 0-5, regardless of where they reside in DC, should expect from the ECE workforce in terms of knowledge and competency and through carefully mapped higher education programs and PD offerings that support these standards, the District promotes development of ECEs along a clear path to success. Strategy B promotes quality assurance through a mechanism to provide accountability for the ECE workforce. The implementation plan for the Career Guide not only provides a comprehensive review of the stop gaps within DC that allows ECE professionals from moving seamlessly through the levels in the Career Guide but also allows for the Career Guide to direct the forward progress of new and current ECE professionals.

Accomplishments

The Federal Head Start Reauthorization Act, Federal Child Care Development Fund Program and the District of Columbia Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Act of 2008 all require OSSE to create opportunities that increase the quality of the early childhood workforce. OSSE's 2009 – 2013 Strategic Plan requires training and technical assistance for providers to ensure that all children entering Kindergarten are prepared for school and that all school environments are prepared for all young children. OSSE's mission is to develop an effective early childhood education system by implementing high standards for programs and professionals, creating supports to meet standards, adhering to rigorous accountability measures, collaborating with other agencies, engaging community stakeholders and securing strong financial supports.

DC PROS is a comprehensive plan that outlines the necessary elements for the effective professional development of DC's early childhood educators. It not only includes core knowledge areas and a Career Guide, but also lays out a plan for Access and Outreach, Funding, Quality Assurance, and Governance and System Financing. As a PD plan, DC PROS is aligned

with the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s Conceptual Framework for Early Childhood Professional Development and their Workforce Designs: A Policy Blueprint for State Early Childhood Professional Development Systems.

The culmination of over 15 months of intensive work and ongoing collaboration among a cross-sector of early childhood stakeholders, DC PROS is truly a District-wide plan. The University of the District of Columbia Center for Applied Research and Urban Policy held three citywide strategic stakeholders meetings, made presentations to the former Mayor’s Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Development and its Professional Development Subcommittee, and attended community forums and national conferences to gather feedback on the development of the plan.

Stakeholders from a cross-sector of the early childhood community examined ways that qualifications can be raised within the overall existing workforce. They used a gap analysis process to examine expectations by analyzing the then-current level of PD activities and to identify needed services. Ideas were presented for the development of an effective system to train and induct entry-level early childhood practitioners across public school, private, parochial and community-based programs in the city. In addition, they explored options and opportunities for PD and related policies, funding and quality assurance mechanisms at all levels. Discussions were consistently centered on one critical focus: How best to develop a continually evolving, high quality, PD plan for DC’s early childhood practitioners to ensure positive child and family outcomes.

Promotion of Children’s Learning and Development and Improvement of Child Outcomes (D)(1)(a)

The DC PROS provides detailed information on the knowledge and competencies early childhood educators should master, broken into 11 core knowledge areas. These core knowledge areas apply to all lead and assistant teachers in child care homes and centers, licensed out-of-school time providers, administrators such as directors, supervisors and other early learning and development leaders, Head Start teachers, Early Head Start teachers, Pre-K and other teachers and teacher assistants.

The current Framework outlines core knowledge for ECEs, with the goal of ensuring “that all early childhood practitioners have interdisciplinary competencies based on core knowledge areas

that define a set of professional standards that guide decisions and practices.” (DC PROS, 2009, p. 6) The eleven core knowledge areas and examples of topics to be covered under each are outlined in the table below:

Table D1.2 Core Knowledge Areas

#	Area	Examples
1	Child Growth and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principles of child growth and development Domains and stages of development (motor, language, cognitive, social-emotional) Links between various aspects of development and learning
2	Observing, Documenting and Assessing to Support Young Children and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observation and assessment of children’s behavior Screening instruments for all domains (motor, language, cognitive, social-emotional) Using observations and assessments in an effective way to support children and families Recognize the types and signs of child mental health issues
3	Health, Safety, and Nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical Development, Health and Safety Nutrition Types and signs of abuse, neglect and violence; responsibilities and procedures for reporting abuse and neglect Developmental consequences of abuse, neglect, stress and trauma
4	Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and implementing a developmentally appropriate curriculum that advances all areas of children’s learning and development Approaches to Learning, Language and Literacy, Mathematical Thinking, Scientific Inquiry, Creative Arts Considering culturally-valued content and home experiences Strategies that offer choices and foster curiosity, problem solving and decision-making Planning and implementing a curriculum that is aligned with DC’s Early Learning Standards
5	Inclusive Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characteristics of children with varied disabilities Adaptations of curricula to include children with disabilities in all classroom activities Interventions to enhance the growth and development of children with disabilities and development of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or the Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
6	Learning Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates learning environments that are responsive to the diverse needs of the abilities and interests of young children Strategies to implement learning environments that support

		<p>developmentally appropriate practices (infants, preschoolers, school age)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptations to fully include children with special needs
7	Building Family and Community Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles and strategies that view families as functional and resilient with diverse values, cultures, unique temperaments and learning styles • Establishing relationships and communication with families and other community systems that are productive, supportive and pro-active • Issues, challenges and services regarding mental health
8	Diversity: Family, Language, Culture and Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture, language and ethnicity as a positive influence on a child's development • Helping young children understand and appreciate different cultural traditions
9	Program Management, Operation and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaches and techniques to plan, organize and use available resources • Effective strategies for working productively with staff and community resource individuals and agencies • Techniques to conduct program evaluation and to implement program improvements • Interpersonal development and communication including team building, collaboration and conflict management principles and skills. • Fiscal planning and management
10	Professionalism and Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope of the early childhood profession • Impact of federal, state and local standards, policies, regulations and laws which govern and impact on children, programs and early childhood professionals • Approaches to evaluate one's professional skills and need for professional development • Responsibility to work with other early care and education professionals, parents and the community to discuss and improve policies, laws, standards, practices that impact children, programs and the profession
11	Social-Emotional Development and Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and emotional development • Communication techniques for guiding young children toward self- direction and confidence • Guidance and management strategies that support developmentally appropriate practices • Approaches to provide supportive relationships with children and to foster positive peer-to-peer interactions • Approaches to meet the mental health needs of all children

Progression of Credentials and Degrees (D)(1)(b)

Entry level requirements for Early Childhood Educators are outlined in the DC Code of Municipal Regulations (DCMR). These requirements vary by type of program and role of ECE. The table below outlines each ECE category and where in the appendix to locate the detailed description of the role’s associated required qualifications.

Table D1.3 Qualifications for ECEs

Type of ELDP	Role	Appendix	DCMR Section
DCPS PreK Program	Teacher	D1.3	DCMR §5E-1601
Child Dev Center	Center Director	C3.1	DCMR §29-332.1
Child Dev Center	Teacher	C3.1	DCMR §29-334.1
Child Dev Center	Assistant Teacher	C3.1	DCMR §29-336.1
Out-of-School Time	Center Director	C3.1	DCMR §29-345
Out-of School Time	Group Leader	C3.1	DCMR §29-346
Out-of-School Time	Asst Group Leader	C3.1	DCMR §29-347
Home-Based	Caregiver	C3.1	DCMR §29-352.1
Head Start	Teacher	D1.4	N/A
Early Head Start	Teacher	D1.4	N/A

In addition, DC regulation requires that staff in Child Development Centers and Out-of-School Time programs receive annual required training (i.e; “clock hours”) which is verified by licensing specialists who review the staff portfolio during their site visits to ensure that the minimum training hours are met. The trainings must be aligned with topics listed in the regulations (See Appendix D1.5).

Workforce development is complex in DC due to the fact that regulations differ by type of program and role of ECE. However, much effort has been made to align regulation requirements to keep ECEs advancing along a career trajectory. The newly developed draft Career Guide serves as a common statewide progression of credentials for ECE. The Career Guide lays out multiple options for the ECE workforce to achieve the next level of credentials. Each level within the Career Guide also has specific requirements for four ECE professional tracks: Administration and Leadership, Infant/Toddler, Pre-Kindergarten and After-School. The Career Guide provides common positions within the ECE field that pertain to each level so the

individual will have a better understanding of the type of position suitable for his/her level of expertise.

To facilitate ECE's progression in the Career Guide, OSSE has solidified a method for assessing and tracking credential levels. The pertinent information ECE professionals will have to track will be housed within the newly developed Professional Development Registry. The Professional Development Registry will track teacher demographic information, credentials, degree(s), courses taken over the years to meet credential requirements, and continuing education/training credits, among other data. The training will be tracked by indicators that relate each training to its aligned core knowledge area(s); all trainings must be approved by OSSE as aligned with the core knowledge areas. Information in the PD Registry will be available to providers and mentors to allow those individuals to support the ECEs on their career path.

Engagement of Postsecondary Institutions and Professional Development Providers in the Alignment of Professional Development Opportunities with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework (D)(1)(c)

The current Framework highlights the continued need for requiring higher education institutions that are receiving scholarship funding from DC to align their coursework with the core knowledge areas. DC has developed resources for higher education (currently under review) that facilitate the alignment of programs with core competencies and early learning standards. Degree and/or certification programs will meet these requirements within their programs and be approved by OSSE as to the integrity of programs. In-service professional development will also be developed to match standards.

The Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Amendment Act of 2008 made voluntary access to high quality Pre-K education available to all 3 and 4-year-olds residing in DC. A central component of the legislation mandated that by 2017, all teachers must earn a BA and all assistant teachers must earn an AA in early childhood education or a related field. While the law provides exceptions for charter LEAs that do not receive Title I funds (only three schools in the District), this requirement will dramatically change the landscape of early learning and development in DC. With the passage of the Pre-K Acceleration and Clarification Amendment Act of 2010, the DC Council charged the University of the District of Columbia with the task of convening DC

higher education institutions with the purpose of developing and carrying out a plan of action to achieve the degree requirements mandated by the law. Currently, several local colleges and universities are partnering to meet this challenge.

PD providers not affiliated with IHEs must also align their trainings with the core knowledge areas. In 2011, OSSE established a process by which an individual, an organization, a government partner or a national advocacy agency can become certified to provide professional trainings (See Appendix D1.6). Each applicant for trainer certification “must provide evidence that they have college credits aligned with the Core Knowledge Area(s) in which they plan to train...” (OSSE Trainer Approval Program, 2010, p. 6). In addition, applicants must provide “evidence that they meet requirements to deliver trainings at a specific level” (OSSE Trainer Approval Program, 2010, p. 8). Through careful alignment and oversight, DC is ensuring that professional development opportunities are aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

High-Quality Plan for (D)(1)

Strategy A. Design an updated, clear, publicly available Framework of Early Childhood Workforce Knowledge and Competency for individuals working with children from ages 0-5 (D)(1)(a)

Although DC PROS provides a productive starting point, since the ELDS and QRIS standards are planned to be revised and updated, the knowledge and skills required of educators who teach to the Early Learning and Development Standards and who work in programs accountable to the Quality Rating and Improvement System must also be aligned. The framework as it stands highlights the main elements needed for high quality professional knowledge competencies as aligned with the old ELDS. In order for the document to stay viable and relevant to the ECE workforce, a thorough review must be done to assess that educators who meet the competencies are indeed prepared to be effective in early childhood settings with high need learners. In addition, the knowledge and skills necessary for ECEs must be divided into levels by age of the child served.

Activity 1: Revise the core knowledge areas of DC PROS to align with revised ELDS and QRIS standards.

The SECDCC will oversee the revision of core knowledge areas, while OSSE will collaborate with the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children to examine and revise core knowledge areas to build out a robust Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. The Framework will be evidence based and aligned with revised ELDS and QRIS standards. The Framework will be focused on fully preparing high quality teachers who will then prepare children to enter Kindergarten with the age-appropriate knowledge of mathematics and literacy as well as the social-emotional health needed to be successful students. OSSE will need to examine ways to incorporate effective use of data to guide instruction and program improvement as the development process moves forward. The developed Framework will be made available for public comment and will be vetted by focus groups including program directors, teachers, family representatives, higher education and other professional development providers and school principals prior to being finalized. SECDCC will make a recommendation to the Mayor regarding approval of the revised Framework. The Framework will be adopted by the Superintendent as District policy.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

1. Revise the Core Knowledge elements of DC PROS to align with revised ELDS and QRIS standards: Spring 2012 – Fall 2013, OSSE
Milestone a. Draft available for public comment: Summer 2013, OSSE
Milestone b. Present updated Framework to SECDCC for approval: Fall 2013, OSSE

Strategy B. Develop an implementation plan for the Career Guide (D)(1)(b)

NAEYC states that “early childhood professionals need to be able to plan and sequence the achievement of increased qualifications [and] understand the professional possibilities resulting from such acquisitions” (Moine, 2008, p. 15). The updated Career Guide allows ECE professionals to do precisely this through four tracks of professional development: Administration and Leadership, Infant/Toddler, Pre-Kindergarten and After-school. It also has suggestions within each track at each level of appropriate positions for employment. However,

even the most well-designed Career Guide needs a careful implementation strategy to be successful.

Activity 2: Conduct a needs assessment of updates to existing policies, legislation and regulations that impact ECE progression of credentials

DME will conduct a needs assessment to review the current policies, legislation and regulations that relate to ECE progression of credentials and will make recommendations on how to improve on the process of obtaining a credential, on the types of credentials available and on the Career Guide itself. DME and the SECDCC will specifically consider the establishment of an Infant/Toddler credential and an Early Intervention credential. Requirements related to knowledge and competency assessments will also be reviewed and reconsidered. Recommendations will be approved by the SECDCC.

Activity 3: Finalize and implement an updated Career Guide.

The updated Career Guide, which is aligned with NAEYC and the Council for Exceptional Children, Division on Early Childhood standards links to both credentials and professional development and covers all workplace settings. This draft will be used as the starting point for revisions necessitated by the needs assessment conducted as part of Activity 2. Once the updated Career Guide has been implemented, OSSE will focus on creating a publicly accessible database to track ECE competencies (Described in (D)(2)).

Activity 4: Ensure degrees and credentials are related to levels of increasing quality for ECE professionals

The necessary quality assurance that links the levels of the Career Guide with improved practice will be implemented through the QRIS. For ELDPs participating in the QRIS, teacher performance will be verified. Through the model teacher observation form, uniform data will be collected. After data are collected, OSSE will conduct an analysis to examine the relationship between teacher performance and levels on the Career Guide, degrees and credentials. DC envisions utilizing the evidence gathered to promote that progress through the articulated levels of the Career Guide provides the early childhood workforce with high quality educators.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

2. Conduct a needs assessment of updates to existing policies, legislation and regulations that impede ECE progression of credentials: Spring 2012 – Spring 2013, DME, SECDCC
Milestone a. Identify agency staff to identify the parameters of and conduct the needs assessment: Spring 2012, DME
Milestone b. Working group will convene to analyze data: Fall 2012, DME, SECDCC
3. Finalize and implement an updated Career Guide: Summer 2013 – Summer 2014, OSSE
Milestone a. Stakeholder input gathered and integrated into draft: Spring 2014, OSSE
Milestone b. Draft approved by SECDCC: Summer 2014, SECDCC
Milestone c. New Career Guide implemented and made available to the public: Summer 2014, OSSE
4. Ensure degrees and credentials are related to levels of increasing quality for ECE professionals: Spring 2014 – Winter 2015, OSSE
Milestone a. Data analysis for baseline figures: Fall 2014, OSSE

Strategy C. Expand outreach to higher education institutions and PD providers to ensure alignment of programs with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

It is imperative that DC expands outreach to PD providers as well as higher education institutions to ensure that all training opportunities available are aligned to the Framework and that programs are developed based on research supported best practices for early childhood educator professional development (e.g., U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Even the very best partnerships with PD providers are ineffective if the content and skills taught are not aligned with the core knowledge areas needed by DC educators. DC is currently partnered with several higher education groups dedicated to the alignment effort; however, DC will focus on expanding the outreach efforts to further engage other PD providers. Being more inclusive ensures that all program training opportunities available to ECEs support their development along the Framework competencies.

Activity 5: Develop a communication strategy to expand outreach efforts specifically to early childhood education professional development providers.

DC is in the process of developing a Certified Trainer Registry as part of the Professional Development Registry. As noted above, the Trainer Approval Program Policy and Procedures manual was recently released.

The Certified Trainer Registry is an updated listing of those trainers and programs that have been certified in DC. Effort will be made to widely publicize the availability of the Certified Trainer Registry and the process through which a PD provider can become certified. Materials will be developed for online availability that includes, but is not limited to, a FAQ on the mechanics and purpose of the Certified Trainer Registry, guidelines on how to confirm that a program is aligned with the core knowledge areas, how to become certified as a trainer and how to become listed in the Certified Trainer Registry. DC will also develop mass communication pieces that announce the availability of the new Registry and direct programs to the website to find more information.

This is to ensure that ECE professionals get a variety of high quality opportunities for training inclusive of and beyond the higher education system. This effort will help to keep center licenses current because enough training opportunities will be offered for their employees and will ensure all adults working with children are trained in the basics, such as health/safety training and the core knowledge areas.

Activity 6: Expand articulation efforts with higher education institutions to align PD opportunities with the Framework and validate programs that are in alignment with the Framework.

The RTT-ELC Higher Education Consortium, inclusive of local Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) with education programs that prepare infant, toddler and early childhood educators, will be responsible for devising an articulation plan and a process for validating programs and PD opportunities that align with the Framework. Working with the Consortium, OSSE's efforts will focus on strengthening existing articulation agreements and exploring opportunities for developing new agreements to allow for ease of transfer of credits to progress in the credentialing process. Engagement efforts will also strive to increase the capacity of IHEs to

provide infant/toddler courses and increase the opportunities for current and new ECE professionals to participate in clinical field experiences that are supervised and appropriate for the level of credential for which they are in training to achieve (both known deficits of the current professional opportunities available within DC). DC will also explore opportunities to establish relationships to enhance clock hour training opportunities.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

5. Develop a communication strategy to expand outreach efforts specifically to early childhood education professional development providers: Spring 2012 – Summer 2012, OSSE

Milestone a. Develop informational materials for website targeted to other professional development providers: Spring 2012, OSSE

Milestone b. Develop communication pieces regarding the Registry to distribute District-wide. Summer 2012, OSSE

6. Expand articulation efforts with higher education institutions to align PD opportunities with the Framework and validate programs that are in alignment with the Framework: Winter 2012 – Summer 2013, OSSE, Higher Education Consortium

Milestone a. Identification of early learning PD opportunities that exist that need to be and can be brought into alignment with the competencies Framework: Spring 2012, OSSE, Higher Education Consortium

Milestone b. Identification of new articulation agreements and update existing articulation agreements: Fall 2012, OSSE, Higher Education Consortium

Milestone c. Identification of opportunities to create and/or enhance toddler/infant coursework offered and to create and/or enhance field experience opportunities: Fall 2012, OSSE, Higher Education Consortium

(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

The District is committed to providing PD opportunities to current and future ECEs with the goal of improving childhood outcomes and is currently involved in initiatives to reach that goal.

While the DC PROS and updated Career Guide are a solid start, they are also basic steps that have not yet helped DC achieve the quality it desires across all sectors to date. DC is expanding access to effective PD opportunities through partnerships with 11 early childhood education programs that operate in DC and also through the development of the Certified Trainer Registry as mentioned above. Incentives and policies that currently support ECE development include several different scholarship opportunities as well as the updated Career Guide. Through the Fall 2011 launch of a Professional Development Registry, the creation of alternative pathways that fulfill ECE workforce needs in DC, the implementation of a financial incentive program for effective ECEs, and development of a corps of career counselors and mentors, DC will support early childhood educators in improving their knowledge, skills and abilities.

There is a need to ensure that all ECE professionals have access to degree programs that meet their PD needs and the workforce needs of DC. External factors amplify this need, such as new regulations regarding Head Start teachers and assistant teachers and DC legislation requirements for degree attainment for Pre-K teachers. While DC has many opportunities for ECEs to earn degrees and/or professional training, some ECE populations are underserved. Access to new types of degree programs will be improved through the development of university based programs and alternative routes that especially focus on bilingual ECE professionals and infant and toddlers programs.

As ECE professionals are working to improve their knowledge and reach higher levels in the Career Guide, DC will explore various options for ECEs to gain recognition and fair compensation for their additional education and expertise. This effort is expected to increase retention of teachers.

The following table indicates the alignment of DC's accomplishments and plan with (D)(2) selection criteria. [The table indicates that DC will be discussing accomplishments in relation to the first three selection criteria as well as offering plans to extend and refine work in each of the areas specified by selection criteria.]

Table D2.1 Alignment of Accomplishments and Plan with Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	DC Accomplishments	High-Quality Plan Strategies			
		Strategy D: Needs Assessment for ECE	Strategy E: Multiple Pathways	Strategy F: Incentives to Attract and Retain ECE	Strategy G: Strategy for Publicly Reported Data
(D)(2)(a) Provision and Expansion of Access to PD Opportunities	✓	•	•		
(D)(2)(b) Policies and Incentives to promote Improvement and Increase Retention	✓			•	
(D)(2)(c) Publically Reported Data for ECE Development	✓				•
(D)(2)(d) Ambitious but Achievable Targets		•	•	•	•

Goals

- By 2013, develop and implement a practical and feasible plan for equitable compensation for all early childhood educators in the District, regardless of setting, funding stream or age cohort of children served
- By 2015, all Early Childhood Educators will have a clearly articulated path for advancing in the Career Guide levels in their chosen career track

Strategies

Strategy D. Examine the pipeline for ECE in DC (D)(2)(a), (D)(2)(d)

Strategy E. Build multiple pathways for new and current ECE professionals to enter and advance through the Statewide progression of credentials (D)(2)(a), (D)(2)(d)

Strategy F. Create incentives to increase retention of, and attract new, high quality ECE professionals (D)(2)(b), (D)(2)(d)

Strategy G. Develop a strategy for publicly reporting workforce data and credentials (D)(2)(c)

The strategies for (D)(2) align with the reform strategies outlined in Section A. Strategies D, E and F all align with the reform agenda to provide better training opportunities for the ECE workforce. Examination of the pipeline is critical to determine the needs of the workforce, and DC must determine if there are ample and appropriate training and professional opportunities to attract and keep highly qualified early childhood teachers. Without a clear understanding of who is currently in the workforce, who is in the education stream to join the workforce and what the actual needs of DC ECEs are, it is difficult at best to accurately determine if DC is providing enough opportunities for these individuals to participate in high quality training. Multiple pathways for new and current ECE professionals ensures that there are appropriate paths that are responsive to their needs – programs that speak their language and alternative programs outside of higher education. Multiple reports and research have proven that ECE professionals working outside the public school system are severely underpaid especially given how critical it is to a child’s future success to have a highly qualified teacher in the early years. In order to retain those currently working in the underpaid sectors and to attract individuals to teach in community based organizations, DC will create incentives to alleviate the disparity in pay. DC will parlay the incentive program into better training opportunities for the ECE workforce by implementing programs that create an incentive for providers to encourage their teachers to move up in the Career Guide.

Strategy G provides accountability by creating a strategy to publicly report aggregate data on the ECE workforce. The public aggregate data feature of the PD Registry will allow DC residents such as parents, advocacy groups or other interested parties to stay in tune with how the ECE workforce is responding to the education and training needed to appropriately and effectively teach DC children from birth to 5.

Accomplishments

The NAEYC and NAECS/SDE position statement emphasizes that there needs to be “significant expansion of professional development...if all early childhood teachers and administrators are to gain knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to implement the early learning standards” (2002, p. 8). Indeed, investment in the ongoing development of early education teachers can have lasting effects on student performance. In the most recent edition of *Teachers College Record*, Spyros Konstantopoulos examines the long-term benefits of teacher effects on student achievement in early grades and finds lasting effects of teacher quality in the early years even when the child has reached third grade (2011). DC’s commitment to ECE development is evidenced by its accomplishments in this area and in its plans for the future. There are certain programs within DC that have excelled in creating quality programs, and DC would like to push all ELDPs in that direction. For example, a recent effort between AppleTree Institute for Education Innovation (an organization dedicated to providing language and literacy programs for the underserved in DC) and three DCPCS – AppleTree PCS, Early Childhood Academy PCS, and DC Prep focused on PD via intense coaching. This program formed the basis for the i3 grant award to implement Every Child Ready – a Response to Intervention model for pre-schoolers.

Provision and Expansion of Access to Effective Professional Development Opportunities (D)(2)(a)

Currently, there are 11 early educator preparation programs available in DC that offer PD opportunities through traditional degree pathways such as Bachelors or Masters degrees and also through alternative pathways such as post-baccalaureate certificates that prepare educator candidates for District licensure. OSSE has examined the quality of programs preparing teachers, service providers and administrators for DC schools and has determined that the programs meet state standards for preparing candidates to enter the profession according to established guidelines for such programs. Approved programs for ECE can be found at the following institutions:

Table D2.3 Approved Early Educator Preparation Programs and Degrees Offered

Institution	Undergraduate	Graduate	Graduate Certificate	Licensure/Certification Program*
American University	•	•	•	
Catholic University of America	•	•		
Center for Inspired Teaching				•
DC Practitioner Teacher Program				•
Gallaudet University	•	•		
George Washington University		•		
Howard University	•	•	•	
Teach for America				•
Trinity Washington University		•		
University of the District of Columbia	•	•		
Urban Teacher Center				•

*At the post-baccalaureate level

In 2009-2010 (the most current year for which data are available), there were 58 program completers from the ECE programs above.

In addition to the Bachelors and Masters degrees offered, the Council for Professional Recognition provides oversight to the CDA National Credentialing Program and offers information and pathways for achieving the CDA credential. CDA programs are also offered at CBOs through grants from OSSE. There are also AA programs available at Central Texas College and the Community College of the University of the District of Columbia.

In 2008, in recognition of the need for talent committed to student learning, DC completely overhauled requirements for teacher licensure and approved new standards for non-degree, post-baccalaureate licensure programs. The new standards opened the door for new pools of diverse talent to become certified DC teachers through means beyond institutions of higher education. As a result of these reforms, qualified non-profit organizations and local educational agencies are

able to develop alternative State-approved educator preparation programs for both teachers and principals.

In order to be approved under the requirements for non-degree, post-baccalaureate licensure programs, all alternative preparation programs in DC must meet a high bar for quality. The January 2, 2009 *Request for Applications: State Approved Educator Preparation Programs* describes the DC's requirements for approved alternative preparation programs. These requirements demonstrate DC's insistence that all incoming educators be strong and capable. The regulatory language recognizing alternative certification appears in DCMR Title 5, Chapter 16, Professional Education Requirements. Section §1601.11 explicitly stipulates that both participants and graduates of recognized alternative certification (non-IHE) programs as well as traditional higher education programs may be licensed.

Alternative preparation programs are useful because they provide options that are not typically available through traditional teacher preparation. The **DC Teaching Fellows** program recruits individuals from all professions and backgrounds to teach in traditionally underserved schools and communities. As a Fellow, individuals are prepared in a six week training program to become teachers in the District's public school system. The individual is enrolled in a teacher licensure program, the DC Practitioner Teacher Program, during their first year of teaching and receives a full-time teacher's salary, benefits, and resources from administrative program staff while teaching full-time. The **Capital Teaching Residency** is a year-long residency program that places individuals in public charter schools to work alongside a mentor teacher. The individuals "develop into skilled educators through extensive coaching, consistent work with a highly-effective mentor teacher, focused professional development coursework, and daily practice perfecting their skills in a real classroom" (Capital Teaching Residency). Additionally, there are Charter LEAs in DC that have some experience conducting alternative pathway programs successfully. **DC Prep**, one of the highest-performing charters in DC, is in its third year training teachers in early childhood education. College graduates join DC Prep as Resident Teachers and spend 1-2 years working alongside a lead Pre-K classroom teacher. Residents learn classroom management and instructional skills in a structured progression, through mentoring and professional development and through participation in an area certification program.

Residents who enter with a strong educational background (through experience or education) may progress faster and become teachers after one year, while those newer to the field can take up to two years to prepare for a lead classroom role.

DC encourages its higher education partners to pursue NAYEC/NCATE accreditation which increases the education provider's ability to attract high quality future and current practitioners. DC is also actively engaged in increasing the higher education partnerships it has, especially distance education programs to expand access to PD opportunities.

Policies and Incentives that Promote Professional Improvement and Career Advancement along an Articulated Career Pathway (D)(2)(b)

DC has several scholarship programs that provide financial incentives for continuous improvement of ECEs. Scholarship funds are provided to practitioners pursuing CDA credentials and Associates, Bachelors and Masters degrees in early childhood education.

DC's OSSE has utilized the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Child Care and Development Funds to expand access to effective PD opportunities by identifying grantees for Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (TEACH) scholarships. The National Black Child Development Institute operates TEACH Scholarships, a national scholarship program that currently operates in 23 states nationwide. The TEACH program focuses on education, scholarship, increased compensation and retention. TEACH DC provides scholarships for teachers who work in a licensed DC center, family child care home, Head Start, Pre-K, District of Columbia Public Schools or Charter School program. These TEACH scholarships are available for CDA credentials and for teachers pursuing an AA or BA at ten DC area colleges and universities. The monies available are split with certain dedicated funds available for CDA and other dedicated funds, over \$800K, for AAs and BAs. The TEACH monies that support teachers who are pursuing their AAs and/or BAs covers tuition, books, a travel stipend, release time for the center and a compensation bonus for the teachers (end year \$350 bonus from TEACH and the center provides a \$300 bonus or a 2% raise). Once a teacher has received their end-year bonus after completing one year under the scholarship, they are required (via the contract they signed at the beginning of the year) to remain at their center/school for an

additional year in an effort to provide consistency in the classroom as they pursue their degree. TEACH DC was launched in October 2010, so while there are not yet any TEACH graduates, there is some promising data that speaks to the potential of the program so far:

Total Number of scholarships provided: 374

Breakdown of scholarships provided:

CDA Credentials:	271
CDA Assessment:	231
CDA Renewals:	19
CDA Second Setting:	21
Associates Degree:	89
Bachelors Degree:	14

Number of retroactive AA & BA scholarships awarded: 21 / 103

Number of TEACH recipients who work with infant & toddlers: 259

The average salary of TEACH recipients: \$11.31/hour or \$23,534/year

Number of colleges TEACH recipients can attend: 10

Average GPA of Associates Degree recipients: 3.014

Average GPA of Bachelors Degree recipients: 3.3

In addition to TEACH, DC has established, through the Pre-K Acceleration and Clarification Emergency Act of 2010, a partnership with the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) through which scholarships are offered to ECEs to participate in UDC's National Center for Urban Education Early Childhood Leadership Institute. The Early Childhood Leadership Institute includes six different tracks: Master of Arts (MA) in Early Childhood Administration and Leadership, Director's Credential, DC Early Childhood Higher Education Collaborative, Human Development Degree Program, Project Headway, and UDC Child Development Center. DC is now exploring opportunities to increase the scholarship funds available, especially targeting cohorts of students in infant/toddler and special education, such as forming additional

partnerships with nationally recognized organizations to implement additional early childhood education scholarship programs.

While there are several opportunities and incentives in DC to promote improvement and career advancement, it is important to note that the progression in the levels delineated in the Career Guide does not guarantee an increase in compensation when an ECE moves from one level to the next. Rather, it is assumed that because the various levels within the Career Guide are connected with employment opportunities available in different settings, advancement along the Career Guide correlates with increased opportunity for higher paying positions.

Strategies for Publicly Reported Aggregated Data on Early Childhood Educator Development, Advancement and Retention (D)(2)(c)

The District has already established that in order for ECE to have the appropriate credentials, ECEs must complete training within the core knowledge areas to establish competency. As mentioned in (D)(1), the tracking of ECE training and credentials will be housed in the Professional Development Registry that will be expanded into a publicly accessible database. The public will be able to access aggregate data on teacher demographic information, credentials, degree(s) and continuing education/training credits. The Professional Development Registry will be marketed in FY 2012 in order to increase attention to the products and drive utilization by current and potential early learning educators. Currently, participation in the PD Registry is voluntary, but participation will be a requirement with the enhanced QRIS.

High-Quality Plan for (D)(2)

Strategy D. Examine the pipeline for ECE in DC (D)(2)(a), (D)(2)(d)

With the assistance of the Consortium of Universities, DC Appleseed, which is “a nonprofit organization dedicated to solving important public policy problems facing the DC area” (DC Appleseed: About), analyzed the supply and demand within the early childhood field in DC. Based on the 2008 Market Study, DC Appleseed concluded that there were at least 1,200 lead teachers in DC, including both Pre-K and infant-toddler, who have no more than an AA and over 1,000 assistant teachers who have no more than a CDA. According to the current Pre-K program guidelines and DC licensing regulations, DC expects all early childhood teaching positions to be

filled with degreed teachers by 2017 (except for those whose experience will allow them to be grandfathered in or are otherwise exempt due to regulation). Between institutions that are oriented mostly toward traditional full-time students and those whose education programs focus almost entirely on graduate students, DC may fall short of the capacity necessary to meet the legislative and regulatory goals that have been set for this workforce.

Activity 7: Conduct ECE Pipeline Needs Assessment and analyze data.

One of the main obstacles to having a successful ECE workforce serving the community appropriately and effectively is the ability to accurately identify the gaps in the workforce population both currently and for future community needs. While there has been excellent work done within the community that focuses on the Pre-K 3 to 4-year-olds, DC will conduct a more comprehensive needs assessment of ECE workforce pipeline which includes all children ages birth to 5. This needs assessment will establish evidence to support not only the creation of new pipelines of high quality and credentialed individuals into the ECE workforce but also to establish multiple pathways for current members of the ECE workforce to progress in the pursuit of ECE credentials. In addition, the needs assessment will project where DC can improve in PD opportunities and identify opportunities for growth. A vendor under the DME will conduct the needs assessment and provide data analysis and recommendations to the SECDCC for consideration.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

7. Conduct ECE Pipeline Needs Assessment and analyze data: Spring 2012 – Spring 2013, DME

Milestone a. Identify and contract with outside vendor to conduct the needs assessment: Fall 2012, DME

Milestone b. Contracted vendor to present data to SECDCC: Spring 2013, Vendor

Strategy E. Build multiple pathways for new and current ECE professionals to enter and advance through the Statewide progression of credentials (D)(2)(a), (D)(2)(d)

DC is committed to identifying additional opportunities through higher education institutions and alternative preparation providers to provide multiple pathways to achieve credentialing in early

education. DC's RTT-ELC Higher Education Consortium, a group of higher education and private teacher preparation and professional development providers will focus efforts on leveraging existing relationships to increase the amount of early childhood PD opportunities that align with a competency Framework that promotes learning and development of the ECE and improves child outcomes.

The traditional model of educator preparation is that individuals come to the early childhood workforce with a high school diploma or equivalent and then move on to a CDA. From there, DC has built a structure (a Career Guide) through which ECE can progress to an AA and BA. However, this process is difficult for some to achieve because of prior professional and personal commitments and lack of support through the process itself. DC recognizes that there is also a need for addressing non-native English speakers who teach in bilingual programs as they progress through the credentialing process as well as addressing a lack of alternative preparation programs that prepare ECEs for work with community-based providers.

For performance measures related to the number of ECEs receiving credentials from programs aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, see Table (D)(2)(d)(1).

Activity 8: Establish an alternative pathway for bilingual early childhood educators to earn their credentials through bilingual teacher preparation programs.

A number of current ECEs are English Language Learners. The ELL ECEs who wish to progress in their credentials are often discouraged from doing so because the current credential requirements only offer courses in English. However, these educators are often hired to bilingual programs where they typically do not speak English, so the English requirement creates an unnecessary hardship. DC seeks to establish an alternative pathway for bilingual early childhood educators to earn their credentials through bilingual teacher preparation programs.

A model bilingual teacher preparation program exists in the Charter College of Early Childhood Education, designed to specifically address the training and education needs of the adult ELLs.

In a recent 2011 article, the idea of instituting Charter Colleges was proposed as “research-driven, flexible, and accountable institutions that would help increase the supply of high quality early childhood educators; provide those workers and their families with stable, well-paying jobs; and create a new model of higher education and credentialing that can be applied to other

fields as well” (Mead & Carey, p.1). A working model of how this Charter College could operate is Teacher U at Hunter College. This program is a two year Masters program that allows its students to teach full time during the week and then meet one Saturday a month to learn how to teach effectively by analyzing videos and modeling exercises (Carey, 2009). The critical difference between this charter college and a traditional education pathway is that the candidates at Teacher U must “demonstrate real learning gains among their students in order to earn degrees” (Carey, 2009). DC will model its charter college after Teacher U; specifically the elements that allows an adult ELL to stay in the work place while pursuing their education and credentials, to use their work experience in their education experience and at the end of the program to prove that they have improved child outcomes as the ultimate measure of their success. By targeting the charter college to ELL ECE, it creates a pathway to meet the bilingual needs of the community and allows ELL ECE to maintain a job and home-life while progressing in their career.

To implement this activity, OSSE will issue a Request for Proposals and will select providers through a competitive funding process.

Activity 9: Establish alternative preparation program pipelines that are designed with the needs of the CBOs in mind.

Another deficit is that the only alternative teacher preparation programs for early childhood educators that are available feed their student base into DCPS and the charter schools. The CBOs do not have a pipeline for staff members who have attended alternative education preparation programs within DC. Similar to Activity 6 above, DC will establish alternative preparation program pipelines that are designed with the needs of the CBOs in mind through a competitive proposal process.

This residency or fellow program will be targeted to enriching the teacher supply to District CBOs in a program similar to Jumpstart. The Jumpstart program is “a national early education organization that helps children develop the language and literacy skills they need to be successful in school, setting them on a path to close the achievement gap before it is too late” (Jumpstart: About Us). The program pairs college students and community volunteers to work in Pre-K classrooms at least twice a week to read “core storybooks and participate in targeted and

intentional activities based on these stories that help develop key language and literacy skills” (Jumpstart: Our Model). The research on the effectiveness of the Jumpstart model can be found in Appendix D2.1. DC will create a pool of ECEs who wish to enter the CBO environment and expose them to the idea of service learning. The pool of ECEs will enter the classroom as assistant teachers and then work their way up to lead teachers. The program will provide them a stipend, credential-building and training to prepare them to enter CBOs as high-qualified and credentialed ECEs.

To meet the needs of CBO staffing, OSSE will support the launch of CBO-sponsored teacher pipeline models through a competitive funding process targeted toward programs that will increase the effectiveness of teachers. DC would seek to support four core competencies through a funded program: coursework, placement, mentoring, and coaching. A competitive funding process will allow OSSE to support and monitor effective program development and implementation.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

8. Establish an alternative pathway for bilingual early childhood educators to earn their credentials through bilingual teacher preparation programs: Summer 2012 – Spring 2014, OSSE
Milestone a. Issue Request for Proposal for competitive funding process: Summer 2012, OSSE
Milestone b. Award funding: Spring 2013, OSSE
Milestone c. Launch planning year: Summer 2013, Awardee

9. Establish alternative preparation program pipelines that are designed with the needs of the CBOs in mind. Summer 2012 – Spring 2014, OSSE
Milestone a. Issue Request for Proposal for competitive funding process: Summer 2012, OSSE
Milestone b. Award funding: Spring 2013, OSSE
Milestone c. Launch planning year: Summer 2013, Awardee

Strategy F. Create incentives to increase retention of, and attract new, high quality ECE professionals (D)(2)(b), (D)(2)(d)

Recruitment and retention of Early Childhood Educators is essential for success with students. A healthy system of human capital not only recruits high quality individuals, but it also retains them and fosters their professional growth. DC will create both human supports and fiscal incentives to attract and retain the most effective educators.

For performance measures related to the number and percentage of ECEs progressing to higher levels on the Career Guide, please see Table (D)(2)(d)(2).

Activity 10: Develop a financing plan for sustained ECE professional development and financial incentives for highly effective ECEs.

It is common knowledge that there is a disparity in the rate of pay among educators, and this is especially so in the ECE workforce. As noted by Mead and Carey, the average pre-school teacher earns approximately \$24,000/year, elementary and secondary public school teachers earn approximately \$51,000 while child care workers earn around \$18,000 (Mead & Carey, 2011). According to the 2010 “District of Columbia Child Care Market Rates and Capacity Utilization” report, District teachers with only their CDA certification makes an average of approximately \$25,000/year.

DC will initiate an economic/fiscal study of the compensation rates of the current ECE workforce and how the implementation of new compensation incentives will impact the District. The goal is to explore whether higher paid ECEs lead to high quality educators being retained not only in DC but in the ECE workforce.

The SECDCC will examine the current funding sources for ECE PD and opportunities for incentive pay across multiple agencies and funding streams. Economies of scale will be explored to determine if there are structures that can be put into place to streamline offerings and realize cost savings, thus freeing up money for incentives. The SECDCC will make recommendations to DME for the development of a five-year financing plan (FY 2013-FY2018) that will extend beyond the RTT-ELC grant period.

Activity 11: Ensure that ECE professionals working toward degrees gain recognition and compensation for their additional education as they progress.

Currently any programs that encourage educators to attain degrees inadvertently create a disincentive for providers, as more educated teachers require higher salaries. DC wants to focus on incentive programs that remove this type of disincentive and encourage providers to promote further credentialing of employees.

A model to be considered is the Child Care Wage\$ Project. This program “provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid teachers, directors and family child care providers working with children between the ages of birth-5” with the intent to “increase retention, education and compensation” (Child Care Wage\$ Project).

Within the Wage\$ program, pay increases are from the state rather than the employer, which creates an incentive for employers to encourage participation of their employees. Some statistics of note from the “Fiscal Year 2011 Statewide Results” are: 59% of the Wage\$ participants were awarded for having an AA or higher in early childhood education (compared to 40% of providers in 2006), 41% of participants who did not have at least an AA provided documentation to show progress in their education, only 12% left their child care positions and 98% of participants said the program encouraged them to stay in their position or pursue higher education.

Whether a bonus system or step increases, DC will implement a pay-incentive program to encourage ECEs to progress in their credentials. This will be done as a RTT-ELC grant-supported program that will be transferred to DC support with the next Market Rate study in 2015.

OSSE will study models and possibilities and consult the financing plan developed by the DME and the SECDCC in order to develop incentive structures and protocols to pilot by FY 2014.

Activity 12: Create a pool of Career Counselors and Career Mentors.

Human supports will be provided to ECEs to help them progress through the Career Guide and motivate them to continue in their studies. A cadre of career counselors and career mentors will be developed under OSSE. Career Counselors will provide guidance and assistance for ECEs moving through the Career Guide. They will offer training sessions, one-on-one support and counseling to ECEs. Career Mentors will be colleagues who agree to mentor a professional

within their site who is one or two Career Guide levels below their own level. This mentor will be able to provide personal success stories and motivation to individuals as they advance through the Career Guide.

OSSE will recruit and manage a pool of counselors and mentors and provide training to those individuals on how to be a successful counselor or mentor to their ECE colleagues.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

10. Develop a financing plan for sustained ECE professional development and ECE incentive pay: Spring 2012 – Spring 2013, DME/, SECDCC

Develop draft financing plan: Fall 2012, DME

11. Ensure that ECE professionals working toward degrees gain recognition and compensation for their additional education as they progress: Spring 2012 – Winter 2015, OSSE

Milestone. Develop draft pay incentive program: Summer 2012, OSSE

12. Create pool of DC Early Childhood Consultants: Career Counselors and Career Mentors: Spring 2012 – Spring 2013, OSSE

Milestone a. Create consultant specific training courses: Spring 2012, OSSE

Milestone b. Conduct outreach to ECEs in DC regarding opportunities to become a consultant: Spring 2012, OSSE

Milestone c. Conduct training seminars and at the successful conclusion, add participant to database of appropriate consultant pool: Fall 2012 – Spring 2013, OSSE

Strategy G. Develop a strategy for publicly reporting workforce data and credentials

(D)(2)(c)

Once the updated Career Guide has been implemented, DC will focus on finalizing a publicly accessible database to track ECE competencies that has statutory authority to compel participation of all licensed providers and requires participation from all providers participating in the QRIS. The Professional Development Registry will provide data to the public on credentials and clock hour training in aggregate form.

Activity 13: Develop a publicly-available portion of the Professional Development Registry.

Once the Professional Development Registry is populated with data, OSSE will develop a portion of the site that provides publicly reported aggregate data on the ECE workforce. The public aggregate data feature of the Professional Development Registry will allow DC residents such as parents, advocacy groups or other interested parties to stay in tune with how the ECE workforce is responding to the education and training needed to appropriately and effectively teach DC children from birth to 5.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

- 13. Develop a publicly-available portion of the Professional Development Registry: Summer 2012, OSSE

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	11	12	14	15	16
Total number of Early Childhood Educators credentialed by an “aligned” institution or provider	58	Re-establish baseline (B)	(B) + 5%	(B) + 10%	(B) + 15%
<p>*”Credentials” is defined in this chart as program completers; this number includes only BA and post-BA teacher preparation programs. DC will calculate a more thorough baseline as part of the ECE pipeline analysis, to include completers of AA and CDA programs.</p> <p>In DC, post-secondary institutions and professional development providers only offer degrees and/or training certifications; they do not credential. The only credentials offered in DC are those for Early Childhood Educators who become teachers in DCPS. They seek their credential/license from OSSE’s Teacher Licensure division after completing their program.</p>					

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	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Level 1 (Lowest)	Not Available		Baseline (B) Established			B+ 5%		B+ 10%		B+ 20%
Level 2	Not Available		Baseline (B) Established			B+5 %		B+ 10%		B+ 20%
Level 3	Not Available		Baseline (B) Established			B+ 5%		B+ 10%		B+ 20%
Level 4	Not Available		Baseline (B) Established			B+ 5%		B+ 10%		B+ 20%
Level 5	Not Available		Baseline (B) Established			B+ 5%		B+ 10%		B+ 20%
Level 6	Not Available		Baseline (B) Established			B+ 5%		B+ 10%		B+ 20%
Level 7	Not Available		Baseline (B) Established			B+ 5%		B+ 10%		B+ 20%
Level 8	Not		Baseline (B)			B+		B+		B+

	Available	Established		5%		10%		20%
Level 9	Not Available	Baseline (B) Established		B+ 2%		B+ 10%		B+ 20%
Level 10	Not Available	Baseline (B) Established		B+ 1%		B+ 1%		B+ 3%
Level 11	Not Available	Baseline (B) Established		B+1 %		B+1 %		B+3 %
Level 12 (Highest)	Not Available	Baseline (B) Established		B		B		B

DC does not have the current capacity to provide baseline data. Data currently available reflect only a sample of the workforce. However, we have initiated several projects (described above) that will enable DC to establish a baseline by 2013.

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) A Common, Statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment

Kindergarten readiness is a content pillar of DC's reform agenda for Early Learning and Development. Understanding Kindergarten readiness not only provides information to the ELDPs that prepare children for Kindergarten, but also provides information to their Kindergarten teachers about how to target instruction to ensure standards mastery for all students. Currently, DC lacks clarity on the knowledge and skills with which the District's children enter Kindergarten. The earliest District-wide student competency data is not available until students are in third grade, and at that level, scores are well below acceptable levels. Only 37.55% of students in public and public charter schools tested at the proficient level on DC's Comprehensive Assessment System in third grade in 2011. Without a clear understanding of the knowledge and skills that students bring with them to Kindergarten, across common measures, DC has no clear pathway for improving instruction in grades K-3. Similarly, without disaggregated data that explores student competencies by ELDP and by child demographic information, DC lacks information needed to guide both policy and instructional decisions. State-level allocation and targeted assistance to particular program sectors as well as differentiated orientations for families arriving from different types of ELDP should be guided by data from reliable, valid Kindergarten assessments. Ensuring a child's academic success and life options begins in the early years, and a Kindergarten assessment will enable DC to be responsive to the needs of children.

The District has long been hungry for data around Kindergarten entry but has lacked the resources to collect student assessment data on a District-wide level. In 2009, the District implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment pilot study. This study developed a framework for a comprehensive Kindergarten entry assessment (inclusive of a variables such as family, teacher and administrator surveys; teacher observations; and environmental measures) and began exploring options for implementing such a framework. Results from the pilot study will be discussed in full under "Accomplishments," below; it has served to prime the District for concerted work in the area of Kindergarten assessment.

However, much work remains to be done. This section details the plans to research, select and implement an assessment that will work for the DC system, as well as align with the criteria of

RTT-ELC, the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and all Essential Domains of School Readiness.

By 2014-2015, the District will begin phased-in implementation of a common, statewide KEA that informs efforts to close the school readiness gap and informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades. The KEA will be developed such that it uses valid, reliable and appropriate tools to collect information that can:

- Establish a descriptive picture for parents and educators of children's strengths and needs across all developmental domains
- Inform instruction and resource decisions at the individual child, classroom and school levels based on children's needs
- Ensure alignment of Kindergarten instruction with the Early Learning and Development Standards
- Inform policy and resource decisions to support children's transition to Kindergarten
- Identify conditions, needs and trends across DC to inform policy and resource decisions moving forward
- Examine the relationship of results to children's prior experiences in early learning and development programs, giving careful consideration to the cautions against using such data to draw inferences about particular programs in the absence of additional information about the conditions under which the programs operate and about the characteristics of the families and children they serve.

The KEA will be:

- Aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and will cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness
- 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
- Administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public and public charter school Kindergarten through a phased-in implementation plan
- Reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data system, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State and local privacy laws

- Funded in significant part with research grants, funds that LEAs can contribute, and local dollars

The KEA will measure the essential domains of school readiness, including language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches toward learning, physical well-being and motor development and social and emotional development. Careful review and consideration will be given to ensure fidelity to the recommendations of the National Research Council's report, *Early Childhood Assessment: Why, What and How*, particularly for any intention to use assessments for program performance evaluations. The state will issue guidance to LEAs regarding the use of KEA data and will caution LEAs against using the assessments for high-stakes decisions. The state will not use the results of the KEA for decisions about program funding.

The data could be used, however, for a variety of policy purposes. Data disaggregated by ELDP program sector might be used to determine sectors in need of additional resources, technical, assistance, or training in order to improve child outcomes. Such data might be used to refine targeted assistance grants to programs whose children arrive in Kindergarten less ready or to capitalize upon the strengths of ELDP program sectors whose children are arriving well-prepared. As a small state, DC can easily facilitate sharing of best practices via inter-program mentoring, but it is not possible to do this effectively without data to drive decisions.

Additionally, since DC's ELDS address both health and social and emotional standards in addition to literacy, math, and science standards, DC is proposing to use the KEA to measure readiness of children along all of these dimensions – cognitive and developmental. Data on these dimensions of development may be used to help inform home visiting programs in traditionally under-served areas of the District based in neighborhoods where the District might identify a cluster or large number of children who do not meet a minimum standard on the KEA; it could also inform the community-engagement efforts of those providers in the targeted areas and increase development and implementation of parent education and support resources.

Finally, data from the KEA will inform instructional decision-making at the Kindergarten and early elementary level, as teachers target areas in which students need extra intervention and/or practice. While this currently happens on a school-by-school basis, the implementation of a KEA

will ensure that all teachers are using data that reflects students’ attainment of the ELDS in order to drive their differentiated instruction throughout the Kindergarten year.

The District will strive to balance the opportunity to use disaggregated KEA data to reflect on children’s prior experiences in ELDPs with the need for caution against using the KEA as a single outcome measure for early childhood programs. To this end, the District will develop guidance and protocols for utilizing KEA data within the full context of QRIS monitoring findings, and children’s family and community experiences to avoid inappropriate conclusions, stereotypes or assumptions about subgroups of children or ELDPs.

The table below indicates the alignment of DC’s plan with (E)(1) selection criteria. Since DC has done previous planning work for this assessment, observe that each strategy listed here is highly detailed and prepared to roll into action. The selection criteria for this grant are matched with each strategy below:

Table E1.1 Alignment of Accomplishments and Plan with Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	DC Accomplishments	High-Quality Plan Strategies						
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
(E)(1)(a) Alignment with Standards and Domains of School Readiness.		●						●
(E)(1)(b) Valid, Reliable, and Appropriate.		●				●		●
(E)(1)(c) Administration of Assessment.		●		●	●	●		●
(E)(1)(d) Reporting to the Statewide Longitudinal Data system.						●	●	●
(E)(1)(e) Funding the Assessment.			●					

Goals

- By 2014-2015, implement pilot KEA in 50 public and public charter school classrooms
- By 2015-2016, implement the KEA in 50% of all public and public charter school Kindergarten classrooms
- By 2016-2017, reach full implementation of KEA in all public and public charter school Kindergarten classrooms

Strategies

Strategy A. Appoint an RTT-ELC KEA Design Team that will engage stakeholders, identify resources, and engage in a planning process to design/select, test, and implement a KEA. (E)(1)(a), (E)(1)(b), (E)(1)(c)

Strategy B. Develop a financing plan and secure long-term funding for the KEA. (E)(1)(e)

Strategy C. By 2013, amend or pass necessary legislation, regulations and guidelines needed to implement the assessment on a statewide basis. (E)(1)(a)

Strategy D. Develop the administrative procedures and training necessary to administer the KEA. (E)(1)(c)

Strategy E. Pilot test the KEA instruments. (E)(1)(b), (E)(1)(c), (E)(1)(d)

Strategy F. Develop guidelines on reporting and use of data. (E)(1)(d)

Strategy G. Implement the KEA Statewide. (E)(1)

Each of the strategies above is aligned with DC's reform agenda for early learning and development. Through the development of a comprehensive KEA, the District will be able to identify and provide proper intervention for children with high needs. In addition, the District will have the information necessary to identify the early learning experiences of those children most in need of support and will be able to target professional development and technical assistance to ELDPs and other support programs such as home visits that impact these particular children. The work of the KEA Design Team (Strategy A) and the SECDCC (Strategies B and C) align with our reform pillar around mapping and alignment. The KEA Design Team will ensure that the comprehensive system is aligned with local and national standards and

representative of research-based best practices. The SECDCC will map out a financing plan for long-term sustainability of the KEA and determine solutions to regulatory barriers that may impede the implementation of the KEA. Strategy D aligns with DC's commitment to effective appropriate professional development for educators. Roll-out of the KEA will be accompanied with high quality training in the procedures necessary to implement the KEA, the rationale for assessment design, and interpretation of data. Strategy F takes this focus on data further to provide clear guidelines on the purposes of the KEA and the appropriate uses of data. This strategy furthers DC's reform agenda of defining and developing accountability systems for quality, as it explores the ways in which KEA data may be used to further strengthen opportunities and support for the learning and development of young children. Strategies E and G include the piloting and implementation of the KEA, aligning with DC's content emphasis on Kindergarten readiness. Each of these strategies as well as their activities, timeline, and responsible parties is explained in the High-Quality Plan below.

Accomplishments

DC's current plan for a Kindergarten Entry Assessment is just that — a plan. Having never entered into action, the District has yet to implement a statewide Kindergarten assessment. However, accomplishments in the past have set the groundwork for the KEA plans that currently exist.

KEA Pilot Study, 2009

In 2009, the District sought to develop and pilot a Kindergarten entry assessment that could provide timely information on an annual basis to:

- (1) Describe the types of activities and supports available to ensure that young children come to Kindergarten on time, well prepared, and with strong connections among their parents, classroom teachers, schools and community social and health supports;
- (2) Summarize the profiles of each year's Kindergarten children at the level of each classroom, each school and each ward, as well as in terms of whether they attend DCPS or public charter schools and other child characteristics (such as the language spoken in the home, child gender, whether the child has been identified for Special Education, the child's gender and age and the type of Pre-K program the child received); and

(3) Identify strengths and weaknesses that warrant being addressed in a timely manner.

Due to resource constraints, the pilot study was able to capture data related mostly to points 2 and 3 above through principal and Kindergarten teacher surveys and teacher assessment of children at the classroom level. The pilot did not include individualized standardized assessment of children, objective measures of classroom teacher behavior, and classroom environments or data from parents and community providers, although these elements exist within the vision for a comprehensive KEA in the District. The pilot study involved a sample of 50 public and public charter schools. Of these, 37 completed all three types of data collection measures, and 42 completed at least one type.

The 2009 Pilot Study provided findings that support 5 major conclusions, as follows. (For the full study, see Appendix E1.1.)

- (1) A KEA similar to that pilot-tested — which includes gathering, entering and analyzing data from principals about their schools and teachers about their classrooms and ratings of every child in their classroom—is feasible to implement at modest cost.
- (2) The majority of Kindergarten teachers have not received much or any professional development related to the formally adopted District of Columbia Early Learning Standards. To promote higher levels of school preparedness, both Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers need to have adequate knowledge and in-depth training related to these standards and the criteria they should use to assess individual children’s level of mastery. (Note that this recommendation is addressed in Section C of this application.)
- (3) In general, principals and teachers agree about many aspects of what is being done and what needs improvement to help prepare children, their families and their schools for positive transitions into school. Areas in high need of improvement include: more effective and timely outreach efforts to communicate with parents as well as Pre-K and community providers about children’s school preparedness and enrollment in Kindergarten (addressed through family engagement strategies in Section C); greater amounts of useful professional development for teachers to be able to implement the learning materials and curricula (especially related to language and mathematics) in their classrooms (addressed in Section D); assistance related to identifying and then

- helping children with emotional and behavioral problems (addressed in Section D); and providing adequate space and materials in the classrooms (it is expected that resources will improve as subsidy reimbursement rates are increased).
- (4) Overall, teacher appraisals of children’s level of school preparedness indicate children in the District of Columbia are performing far below the expected standards of early learning. Less than 50% of the children—by the middle of their Kindergarten school year—are judged to have the minimal skills and knowledge that were expected when they first entered Kindergarten. In the critically important areas of language and literacy, mathematical thinking and social and emotional development, more than one in four children were rated as being at the two lowest levels—that is, their mastery levels were assessed as “not yet” or just “emerging.”
 - (5) The features of the piloted KEA generated data well suited for providing feedback to teachers and principals about their classrooms and schools. Preliminary analyses reveal tremendous variation across Kindergarten classrooms and schools concerning children’s skills and the school preparedness activities and support in place. Frequent systematic assessment of individual children is widely endorsed as an effective strategy in early childhood education to help teachers and administrators design and then evaluate their plans to improve instructional strategies and other classroom and school practices.

The pilot study laid important groundwork: uncovering the need for more Professional Development on the Early Learning and Development Standards, exposing need for more work around the transition to Kindergarten, and indicating a need for additional surveys/strategies to get parent and community input and information. It also built consensus among some key stakeholders that a District-wide KEA would be useful and appropriate.

Cross-State Consortia

The District is part of a cross-State consortium that has issued a Request for Information (RFI) to explore formative and summative student assessments in grades K-2 (See Appendix E1.2 for the text of the RFI). DC is especially interested in attainment measures of the Kindergarten readiness of students, aligned with ELDS. In collaboration with New York, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New

Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island and Tennessee, DC intends to explore opportunities for designing and implementing assessments that measure attainment of standards for Kindergarten readiness that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards and provide data to drive instructional improvement both in the early learning programs and in the early elementary years. In addition, through the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), DC is collaborating with 24 other states in the development of formative assessments for grades K-2 that will build on the results of a KEA to provide targeted feedback to drive instructional decision-making.

High-Quality Plan for (E)(1)

Strategy A. Appoint an RTT-ELC KEA Design Team that will engage stakeholders, identify resources, and engage in planning process to design/select, test and implement a KEA. (E)(1)(a), (E)(1)(b), (E)(1)(c)

The District recognizes the complexities and challenges inherent in assessing young children and the limitations of existing KEA tools to capture the full range of children’s development across the five Essential Domains of School Readiness. It is therefore necessary to establish a broad-based team of early learning and development stakeholders. The KEA Design Team, a subcommittee of OSSE, will carefully establish the goals for a KEA, design the assessment framework, review existing resources and available assessment tools, and develop and oversee implementation of a KEA. In addition, they will coordinate efforts with workgroups established to revise the ELDS, QRIS program standards and Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework to ensure that the entire system’s resources are working in concert to improve child readiness for Kindergarten.

Activity 1. Appoint and convene a RTT-ELC KEA Design Team.

The KEA Design Team will include early learning and development professionals, Kindergarten teachers, school and program administrators, parents, early childhood experts, higher education and professional development providers, and others with necessary expertise on Children with High Needs, English Learners, students with disabilities, and linguistic and cultural relevancy. Representatives will be from public and public charter schools, community based organizations, Head Start grantees, and private schools. (Competitive opportunities will be provided to private

schools seeking funding to implement the KEA.) The Design Team will consider building upon its prior efforts through the KEA pilot and will weigh the benefits of including administrator and teacher survey data and/or parent and community surveys to capture information on family income, parental education level and maternal mental health. Careful consideration will be given to the recommendations offered in the National Academies of Science report on early childhood assessments.

The KEA Design Team will prioritize goals for capturing information on special populations of children as it designs the District's KEA. Specifically, it will ensure that the KEA will provide information that can be disaggregated by special populations of children to identify their specific needs, inform instruction and supports at the classroom level, and inform broader policy and resource decisions at the community level and District-wide.

Concurrent with the finalization of the District's revised ELDS, the KEA Design Team will begin meeting in Winter 2012 to specify the exact purposes of the KEA, identify the resources available to support its development, and begin consideration of existing assessment tools to determine whether it is necessary to purchase, modify or develop new tools that are aligned to the ELDS and will be appropriate to the KEA goals. This will include conducting a cross-walk and analysis of current tools and practices to identify how they align with the District's ELDS and exploring resources offered in response to the multi-state Request for Information.

The KEA Design Team will make concrete recommendations on what instrument(s) will be administered, by whom, and when. This group will establish an ambitious yet achievable timeframe to develop, test and pilot the KEA by Fall 2014. Outcomes will be assured through development of milestones and business rules that govern decision-making processes to be used in the case that consensus cannot be reached. EOM will contract with necessary early childhood assessment expert(s) to assist the Design Team.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

1. Appoint and convene a RTT-ELC KEA Design Team: Winter 2012 – Spring 2013, OSSE
Milestone. Develop a meeting schedule, protocols for decision-making, and a timeline for KEA development and implementation: Spring 2012, OSSE

Strategy B. Develop Financing Plan and Secure Long-term funding for KEA. (E)(1)(e)

Developing and implementing a KEA incurs significant costs that will require sustainable funding from a range of available resources. Costs include those related to planning and development of the KEA and/or purchasing existing tools; pilot testing; training and administering the KEA; quality assurances; modifications to the SLED to incorporate and use the KEA data; and analyzing and using the data. Many potential sources exist in the form of grants, in-kind contributions and state and local funds. Leadership is needed to identify these, pursue funding opportunities, and develop a coordinated budget to support the range of upfront and on-going costs of the KEA. The District is committed to a funding structure that ensures long-term sustainability of the KEA statewide. In year 1 of the grant, 20% of funds will be generated from research grants, local dollars and sources outside RTT-ELC; during remaining grant years, 50% of funds will come from other sources; and the KEA will be fully funded with other sources beyond the grant years.

Activity 2: Develop a detailed financing plan for each of the phases of KEA development and implementation, as well as for the long-term sustainability of the KEA.

SECDCC will provide recommendations for the development of a detailed financing plan for each of the phases of the KEA development and implementation, as well as for the long-term sustainability of the KEA. OSSE will develop the plan. The plan will consider existing and potential sources including in-kind contributions from District agencies and schools, private philanthropic sources, sections 6111 and 6112 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), U.S. Department of Education research grants, local LEA sources and funds available for the development of the District's SLED. The Preliminary Financing Plan will be due to the SECDCC in the Fall 2012 and the Long Term Financing Plan will be determined by the Fall 2013 and updated every three years or more frequently as funding streams change. The responsible parties will be OSSE, with the SECDCC in an advisory role.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

2. Develop a detailed financing plan for each of the phases of KEA development and implementation, as well as for the long-term sustainability of the KEA: Summer 2012 - Fall 2013, OSSE, SECDCC

Milestone. Complete preliminary Financing Plan: Fall 2012, OSSE

Strategy C. By 2013, amend or pass necessary regulations and guidelines needed to implement the assessment on a statewide basis. (E)(1)(a)

Within the District, public charter schools operate as independent local education agencies under the Public Charter School Board. Careful consideration must be made to draft regulations and guidelines that provide needed support for the implementation of a statewide KEA in accordance with the DC School Reform Act.

Activity 3: Address any regulatory barriers to District-wide implementation of the KEA.

OSSE, advised by the SECDCC, will review and seek to address any legislative or regulatory barrier to District-wide implementation of the KEA. This may include engaging and raising support from critical stakeholders, and securing passage of legislative and/or regulatory changes. The groups will examine legislation, rules and regulations related to all public and public charter school Kindergarten programs to ensure no barriers will prevent implementation statewide. Regulations necessary to implement the KEA will need to be drafted so as not to limit the “areas of exclusive control” granted to public charter schools within the DC School Reform Act. These regulations must also include mechanisms to accommodate English learners and children with special needs.

Due to the DC’s unique status under the Home Rule Act of 1973 as a city-state in which all local laws must either be affirmatively approved by Congress or sit before Congress for a required period of passive review before taking legal effect, this process is complex and time intensive. The timeline will run 2012-2013. OSSE will head this effort, with the SECDCC, stakeholders, the State Board of Education, DCPS, the Public Charter School Board and the DC Council participating.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

3. Address any legislative or regulatory barriers to District-wide implementation of the KEA: Fall 2012 – Fall 2013, OSSE, SECDCC

Milestone. Complete drafts of all proposed regulatory language and legislation: Summer 2013, OSSE

Strategy D. Develop the administrative procedures and training necessary to administer the KEA. (E)(1)(c)

As important as the proper assessment instrument is the method in which the assessment is implemented. Administrators, testing coordinators and teachers need to know how to administer the test, how to ensure that the assessment remains secure, and how to interpret and act on results when they are provided.

Activity 4: Deliver training to administrators and teachers on the administration of the KEA.

Upon selecting/modifying and/or developing the KEA instruments, the KEA Design Team, in consultation with an early childhood assessment and evaluation expert, will develop recommendations for 1) training and information to be delivered to principals, teachers and testing coordinators on the administration of the instrument(s) and use of data, 2) administrative protocol to ensure fidelity of implementation and appropriate and consistent data collection and 3) provisions to maintain confidentiality of the data.

OSSE will oversee development of the training and administrative protocols and guidelines described above and will make high quality training available to those teachers and administrators in schools selected to participate in the pilot test. The training and protocol will be relevant to all public and public charter classroom teachers and any voluntarily participating private schools and will include specifications on administering the assessments to children with High Needs, including English learners and children with disabilities. Training materials will be written in 2013 and training will be made available in Spring 2014. Lead agencies include the

KEA Design Team, OSSE and an early childhood assessment expert. Public charter schools may elect to design their own training opportunities based on guidance provided. Participants in the training will include teachers, principals, testing coordinators and parent representatives in pilot schools. As the KEA scales up, training will expand to reach testing coordinators at every school site.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

4. Deliver training to administrators and teachers on the administration of the KEA: Winter 2013 -Spring 2014, KEA Design Team, OSSE, contractor under OSSE
Milestone. Develop training materials by Fall 2013, OSSE

Strategy E. Pilot test the KEA instruments. (E)(1)(b), (E)(1)(c), (E)(1)(d)

The KEA instruments must be tested for validity and reliability of scores using a representative sample of Kindergarteners in the District to ensure that the assessment measures reflect the five Essential Domains of School Readiness and capture the right data to address the purposes of the KEA. The protocols for KEA administration and use and handling of data, as well as the training related to these, should also be tested to ensure they are sufficient to support accurate administration of the KEA and responsible and accurate use and storage of sensitive data. A pilot test will enable the District to identify and address any issues, gaps or shortcomings of the KEA and make necessary changes before the KEA is administered to all Kindergarteners. The pilot will include public and public charter Kindergarten classrooms and will ensure there is a sufficient representative sample of High Need Children to ensure a representative sample among groups of interest.

Activity 5: Pilot test the KEA.

OSSE will develop, and the SECDCC will approve a plan to pilot test the KEA instrument(s) and the accompanying training and administrative protocols with a representative sample of Kindergarten children and teachers. SECDCC will contract with an evaluator to carry out the evaluation of the work, while OSSE will oversee the implementation process. The evaluator selected must have expertise in assessment validation and early childhood education.

Activity 6: Revise administration and assessment protocols based on results of pilot.

The KEA Design Team and pilot evaluator will review the results from the pilot and propose to OSSE and the SECDCC necessary changes to the KEA and accompanying training and administrative procedures to ensure the validity and reliability of scores before statewide implementation. The timeline for this activity will run Fall 2014-Spring 2015. Lead agencies include OSSE, and an evaluator with expertise in early childhood education and assessment validation, who will work under the SECDCC. Participation will be asked from teachers, principals and parents in pilot schools.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

5. Pilot test the KEA: Summer 2013 - Fall 2013, OSSE, KEA Design Team
Milestone. Administer the KEA: Fall 2013, OSSE, ECEs
6. Revise administration protocols based on results of pilot: Spring 2014, OSSE, KEA Design Team, Evaluator

Strategy F. Develop guidelines on reporting and use of data. (E)(1)(d)

To ensure that the KEA data are interpreted and reported accurately and responsibly, the District must develop specific protocols for teachers, school administrators, agency staff and policymakers, and other stakeholders on what the data can and cannot validly and reliably say and what/how data should be reported to which audiences. These materials will include guidelines on reporting information on children with High Needs and will specifically address what the data does and does not say about these populations, as well as the appropriate implications of results for instruction, schools and policy decisions specific to the needs of children.

Activity 7: Develop protocols and guidelines for data analysis, usage and reporting.

The KEA Design Team will make recommendations and OSSE will develop protocols and guidelines for data analysis, usage and reporting. OSSE will oversee implementation of protocols related to how the assessment data will be used and reported to ensure responsible use and interpretation of the findings.

Specific protocols for using data at the program, community and State level will be developed. In addition, the plan will specify how the data will be incorporated into SLED and how the District

will use the data regularly to track and report progress toward closing the school readiness gap, inform instruction at the classroom level and inform policy decisions at the school and District level. The timeline for this activity will run Fall 2013-Fall 2014. OSSE will lead this effort. Participation will be asked from parents, teachers and school administrators from both public and public charter schools, agency staff, DC Council and the public at large.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

7. Develop protocols and guidelines for data analysis, usage and reporting: Fall 2013 – Fall 2014, OSSE, KEA Design Team

Milestone. Make recommendations regarding data use: Fall 2013, OSSE, KEA Design Team

Strategy G. Implement the KEA Statewide. (E)(1)

For the District to achieve its goal to implement a statewide KEA, it must pursue an ambitious yet achievable timeframe in which to make any necessary modifications to the instruments, training and/or protocols following the pilot test, beginning with a roll-out to half of the District's Kindergarten classes in the Fall of 2015, and all Kindergarten classes in the Fall of 2016. With District-wide KEA results, it will be possible to analyze data to answer specific questions about the needs of different schools throughout the city, as well as different subpopulations of children. This will be a priority of the District, with the intent to use the information to guide decisions about policy and resources to close the gap at Kindergarten entry and improve instruction and supports to children with high needs and their families.

Activity 8: Develop a continuous improvement protocol for revision of assessment tools and/or administrative and reporting procedures.

The District will implement the KEA in 50 classrooms in Fall of 2014, half of all public and public charter Kindergarten classrooms in Fall of 2015, and District-wide by Fall 2016. The District will include a plan for continuous monitoring to ensure that scores from the KEA remain valid, reliable and appropriate at full-scale.

On an annual basis, OSSE, on behalf of the SECDCC, will engage a third-party evaluator to conduct random reliability checks to ensure that the KEA is implemented with fidelity, that

adequate time is built into the school calendar for training, administration, data entry and data analysis and that all confidentiality measures are taken. An evaluator will be determined by the SECDCC and OSSE by Fall 2013 and reliability checks will occur annually, beginning with the pilot year.

OSSE will also conduct continuous oversight of the assessment system to ensure that the data are being collected and reported correctly over time.

Lead agencies include OSSE, the SECDCC, and a third-party evaluator with expertise in early childhood assessment evaluation. Input will be solicited from parents, teachers, school administrators and testing coordinators in public and public charter schools, agency staff, DC Council and the public at large.

Activity 9: Report KEA results to key stakeholders, in accordance with a developed communications strategy.

The District will also develop a communications strategy to engage stakeholders in the proper use and interpretation of the KEA results. Stakeholders including ELDP representatives, Kindergarten teachers and school administrators, agency leaders, parents and community members, and researchers will be consulted for input on what data will be reported to which audiences in order to inform key decisions at the classroom, school, program and community levels, as well as policy and resource decisions. The communications strategy will address the format and accessibility of data, for example, printed reports, searchable databases, websites, etc. The goal will be to package the results for researchers and consumers in a format that is meaningful and valid for the purposes of the KEA.

The KEA Design Team and the OSSE will oversee design and implementation of the KEA communications strategy beginning in spring 2015 following the first phase of the implementation roll-out in Fall 2014. SECDCC will serve in an advisory role. Full reporting of District-wide results will begin in Spring 2016.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties

8. Develop a continuous improvement protocol for revision of assessment tools and/or administrative and reporting procedures: Fall 2013 - Spring 2015, OSSE, KEA Design Team and Contractor under OSSE

Milestone a. Identify contractor: Fall 2013, OSSE

Milestone b. Develop continuous improvement protocol: Spring 2014, OSSE and KEA Design Team

Milestone c. Implement checks for reliability and rigor: Fall 2014 and ongoing, Evaluator under OSSE and the SECDCC

9. Report KEA results to key stakeholders, in accordance with a developed communications strategy: Spring 2015 and ongoing, OSSE

Milestone. Develop preliminary communications strategy: Summer 2015, OSSE

(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.

The State has elected to respond to criterion E1 only.

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: Including all ELDPs in the Tiered QRIS

The District's new QRIS will be a vehicle for quality assurance of ELDPs throughout DC. By including ELDPs of all types, children throughout the District will benefit from programs that are actively engaged in a continuous improvement process with ECEs involved in high quality professional development and ongoing growth opportunities. No matter whether children are infants or preschoolers, no matter their zip codes, no matter if they receive care in a classroom in a public school, a center or a family child care program, all children in DC will benefit from attending programs that are held to high standards through the tiered QRIS. Ensuring that all programs in the District can use a common set of standards to define high quality will remove the link between funding stream and level of quality that is currently implicit. Children with high needs will attend programs meeting the same level of quality standards, and families of all children will be able to compare quality across the entire market of programs in the District.

Increasing the numbers of ELDPs that participate is imperative to realizing this vision of quality early learning and development for all children. The QRIS will provide quality assurance, accountability, targeted technical assistance and support to enable this vision to become a reality.

The District's approach to involving all EDLPs in its QRIS is three-pronged. The first step is to ensure broad applicability of licensure laws. The District has notable accomplishments in this area. DC Code of Municipal Regulations outlines the requirements for licensure (see Appendix C3.1). Already, DC meets the selection criterion related to licensing and inspection that applies to all programs that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting.

The second step is to modify the current QRS to allow involvement of ELDPs that do not receive subsidies. Currently, Pre-K school-day programs that operate in public and public charter schools are not eligible to participate in QRS. Through the design and roll-out of a revised QRIS (described in Section B), the new QRIS will be open to all ELDPs.

The third step is to incentivize programs to participate in the revised QRIS. Currently approximately 60% of all licensed ELDPs participate in Going for the Gold. This includes all CCDF funded programs as well as Pre-K classrooms within community based organizations established with the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion law (2008, amended in 2010). Early Head Start and Head Start (aside from those in DC Public Schools) are participating as well, as are before and after care programs in public and public charter schools. As a comparison, an average of only 34% of ELDPs participate in tiered quality rating systems nationwide.

DC's plan includes a strategy for involving programs not currently participating in the QRIS and devising incentives for their participation. The table below outlines DC's response to Priority 2. [This table shows that DC will be explaining accomplishments for each of the selection criteria and that the District has a plan for criterion b. The first criterion does not have a strategy associated with it since DC is *already* implementing it fully.]:

Table B1.1 Alignment of Accomplishments and Plan with Selection Criteria

Selection Criteria	DC Accomplishments	High-Quality Plan Strategies	
		Strategy A: Revise QRIS to allow all ELDPs to participate	Strategy B: Enhance standards and streamline existing processes
(a) Licensing and inspection that covers all programs	✓		
(b) QRIS in which all licensed ELDPs participate	✓	•	•

Goals

- By 2015, 80% of all ELDPs currently eligible for QRS will participate in the revised QRIS
- By 2015, 50% of public and public charter schools with Pre-K classrooms in the District will participate in the QRIS

Strategy

Strategy A: Revise QRIS to allow involvement from all types of ELDPs, regardless of funding stream (b)

Strategy B: Design a system of incentives and quality program supports that are appropriate for and attractive to ELDPs across all sectors (b)

The strategies of allowing all programs to participate in the QRIS and devising a system of incentives and program supports to encourage ELDP participation are in direct alignment with the quality assurance pillar of DC’s reform agenda. By involving the maximum number of programs in QRIS, the District is able to engage providers in a continuous improvement process.

Only by involving and engaging programs of every type across the District will DC be able to ensure high quality early learning and development for children with high needs.

Accomplishments

(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

By regulation, DC licensing and inspection applies to all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State (i.e., Pre-K programs in the public schools and public charter schools). The only exceptions to this regulation are outlined in DCMR § 301 EXEMPTIONS FROM LICENSURE. The text of this provision is as follows:

301.1 The provisions of this Chapter shall not apply to the following:

- (a) Occasional babysitting in a babysitter's home for the children of one family;
- (b) Informal parent-supervised neighborhood play groups;
- (c) Care provided in places of worship during religious services;
- (d) Care by a related person, as defined in section 399 of this Chapter; and
- (e) Facilities operated by the federal government on federal government property; except that a private entity utilizing space in or on federal government property is not exempt unless federal law specifically exempts the Facility from District of Columbia regulatory authority.

100 percent of non-exempt programs are required to be licensed and inspected. Appendix P2.1 includes Child Care FAQs that outline the licensing application and inspections required of all programs, including an initial inspection and a fire inspection. Additionally, an FBI check is conducted for all paid staff members. Participation in the current QRS is directly related to the State licensing system. No program can be a part of the QRS system without having a Child Development Center License in good standing, without enforcement actions. The revised QRIS will continue the requirement of licensure for program participants not otherwise regulated by the state.

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

As stated above, the current QRS only allows CCDF subsidized, licensed programs to participate in the rating system. At present, approximately 60% of licensed programs participate in the QRS.

High-Quality Plan for Priority 2

Note to reviewers: Elements of the plan below also appear in Section (B)(2).

Strategy A: Refine QRIS to allow involvement from all types of ELDPs, regardless of funding stream.

As the QRS is revised, care will be taken to re-write program eligibility requirements to ensure that the participation of public and public charter Pre-K programs is encouraged. A QRIS Study Group will be convened to study current processes and to make recommendations to OSSE for the revision of policies related to QRIS participation.

Activity 1: Convene a District-wide QRIS Study Group.

Convening a District-wide QRIS study group with members from the broad range of EDLP settings will allow for the adaptation of Going for the Gold with input from those programs considering participation.

Monthly meetings will begin in January 2012 with participation from representatives of OSSE, DCPS, DCPCS, private providers, CCDF programs, child care homes and Head Start programs. An early childhood expert will serve as a consultant-facilitator of the group. The QRIS Study Group will meet monthly to discuss and make recommendations to OSSE regarding revisions to the QRIS to accommodate the differences in program standards, administrative procedures and rules that the current revised QRIS standards and quality measures do not address or consider. This will remove potential barriers, burdens and disincentives for programs that do not fit the traditional structure under the QRIS. The QRIS Study Group will examine results from the pilot (outlined in Section B, above) and will make recommendations to OSSE related to revisions to the standards and processes implemented. Recommendations will include adjustments to the

program to allow participation from ELDPs of all program types. These recommendations will be used by OSSE to roll-out the District-wide QRIS in FY 2014.

1. Convene a District-wide QRIS Study Group: Winter 2012 – Fall 2013, OSSE
Milestone. QRIS Study Group makes recommendations to OSSE for full District roll-out: Spring 2013, OSSE

Strategy B: Design a system of incentives and quality program supports that are appropriate for and attractive to ELDPs across all sectors.

The District's current Going for the Gold tiered reimbursement system is designed to meet the needs of programs receiving CCDF funds. While the program standards contain important indicators of quality for all ELDPs, the system of evidence review and monitoring will be designed to align with the specific needs of licensed child care centers and homes and will need considerable revisions to be applicable to school-based ELDPs. Additionally, the QRS operates as a mechanism for determining subsidy reimbursement levels, and the incentives for participation are largely financial. Because school-based programs, before and after care for wrap around services, and private-pay programs are not subject to the same type of funding mechanism as CCDF programs, attracting these programs to participate in the QRIS will require a broader menu of incentives.

Activity 2: Revise QRIS to ensure appropriateness for all program types.

The QRIS Study Group will examine all elements of Going for the Gold to ensure that mechanisms and protocols are appropriate for all program types, including those programs that do not receive CCDF funding. The QRIS Study Group will make recommendations to OSSE to include in the 2014 roll-out of the revised QRIS.

A project manager at OSSE and a contractor with the professional knowledge and expertise to refine the QRIS will implement the recommendations of the QRIS Study Group and revise the QRIS for implementation in FY2014. It will further refine the tool based on the lessons learned from the pilot year and initial year of implementation and will ensure that the tool is useful and appropriate for all sectors of programs in the District.

Ensuring that all programs in the District can use a common set of standards to define high quality will remove the link between funding stream and level of quality that is currently implicit. Children with high needs will attend programs meeting the same level of quality standards as children in private-pay care, and families of all children will have access to information and resources to be able to compare quality across the entire market of programs in the District.

Activity 3: Design and implement incentives to encourage QRIS participation from ELDPs.

Convening a District-wide QRIS Study Group with representation from the broad range of ELDP settings is likely to encourage the buy-in and engagement of a strong number of these programs fully participating in the QRIS. The QRIS will be a voluntary system, but the QRIS Study Group will weigh options and develop recommendations on a menu of participation incentives that match the needs and interests of different EDLP settings. Specifically, the QRIS Study Group will examine the Child Care WAGE\$® (Wage\$) wage supplement program and expansion of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project (TEACH) scholarship opportunity currently offered through the National Black Child Development Center.

All ELDPs will be granted access to resources, technical assistance and attractive professional development options that the programs would not otherwise have, as well as an opportunity – through competitive Center for Excellence contracts – for high quality programs rated at the Gold levels to serve as model sites, giving technical assistance to other programs of the same program type. By allowing educators within high quality programs to share their expertise and practice with others, DC will leverage the reach of the most skilled educators, thereby improving practice at lower tiered programs and providing opportunities for professional growth and recognition for those in the higher tiers. Family child care programs would benefit from a similar incentive, being invited to participate in a peer network for knowledge sharing. ECEs within participating ELDPs would be offered opportunities to advance levels on the Career Path through participation in QRIS-related technical assistance. Centers might be offered quality improvement grants to help them implement needed changes to improve. Ideally, as the QRIS Gold Level becomes synonymous with high quality in the market, programs will be motivated to participate

and use the Gold Medal brand as a marketing tool on their website, advertising, and marketing materials.

The QRIS Study Group will meet monthly to discuss and make recommendations to OSSE regarding ways to incentivize Going for the Gold to the broad range of ELDPs in the city. These recommendations will be used by OSSE to roll-out the District-wide QRIS in FY 2014.

Activities, Timeline and Responsible Parties.

2. Revise QRIS to ensure appropriateness for all program types: Winter 2012 – Summer 2013, OSSE

Milestone. QRIS Study Group makes recommendations to OSSE for full District roll-out: Spring 2013, OSSE

Milestone. Consultant delivers outline of revisions to be made: Summer 2013, Consultant under OSSE

3. Design and implement incentives to encourage QRIS participation from ELDPs: Winter 2013 – Summer 2013, OSSE

Milestone a. Conduct fiscal impact study of raising current subsidy reimbursement rates: Winter 2013, OSSE

Milestone b. QRIS Study Group makes recommendations to OSSE for full District roll-out: Spring 2013, OSSE

Table (B)(2)(c) outlines the District’s baseline and annual targets for ELDP participation in the QRIS.

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.

The State has elected to respond to Priorities 1-3 only.

Priority 5: Invitational Priority – Encouraging Private-Sector Support

The Departments are particularly interested in applications that describe how the private sector will provide financial and other resources to support the State and its Participating State Agencies or Participating Programs in the implementation of the State Plan.

The State has elected to respond to Priorities 1-3 only.