

**Preschool Development Grant—Expansion Grant  
Application for Initial Funding**

**CFDA Number: 84.419B**

**October 14, 2014**

**New Jersey's Preschool Expansion Plan**



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### **Selection Criterion A. Executive Summary**

The extent to which the State includes an ambitious and achievable plan for expanding access to High-Quality Preschool Programs that clearly articulates how the plans proposed under each criterion in this section, when taken together, will—

Our state’s history shows that New Jersey knows how to build and maintain high-quality early childhood programs. As a result of the 1998 New Jersey Supreme Court decision in *Abbott v. Burke*, the State remedied educational inequities between low-income urban districts and wealthier districts by mandating, among other things, access to high-quality, standards-based preschool education for three- and four-year old children in more than thirty (30) school districts throughout the State. The State accomplished this by creating a mixed-delivery system of public preschools (44.1%), Head Start (10.8%) and community-based providers (45.1%). We have worked hard over the years to create the High-Quality State Preschool Program, which is recognized nationally for its high quality and its ability to dramatically improve academic outcomes of High-Need children. Despite this fact, New Jersey has been unable to offer similar high-quality supports and training to other programs serving High-Need preschoolers in school- and center-based sites outside of the High-Quality State Preschool Program.

In the last decade, New Jersey has positioned itself to launch and implement its **New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan**. With a sound and reliable infrastructure in place, and with needed funding from the Preschool Expansion Grant, we are poised to meet our overall goal: *To bring the components of the High-Quality State Preschool Program to 19 High-Need Communities through a mixed-delivery system of school-based, private provider and Head Start programs, maximizing the learning and development of Eligible Children (including preschoolers with special needs, English language learners, and other vulnerable populations, such as children in foster care, or in military, homeless and/or migrant families), and collaborating with settings that precede and follow preschool to ensure high-quality experiences throughout the birth to eight continuum.*

We will enhance current programs and generate new High-Quality Preschool Program slots for Eligible Children by:

- Conducting a needs assessment of the current programs;
- Providing intensive support to elevate quality;
- Measuring program progress regularly;

- Monitoring fiscal practices regularly;
- Implementing strategies to enroll hard-to-reach families;
- Meeting children’s individualized needs through comprehensive supports; and
- Aligning and coordinating transitions.

To achieve our goal, we have five ambitious and achievable plans that are based on the same system that we used to create and expand the High-Quality State Preschool Program. The table below provides a synopsis of each of these plans, which are found in greater detail within sections C, D, E, F and Competitive Preference Priority 2.

### New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan

<b>Plan for Ensuring Quality in Preschool Programs (Section C)</b>	
<p><b>Goal:</b> Expand the implementation of the components of the High-Quality State Preschool Program to 19 additional school districts through a mixed-delivery system, by using a continuous evaluation and improvement cycle that defines the program and learning standards, provides support for implementation, evaluates implementation, and adjusts based on the results, with measurable benefits for children at school entry. School districts will oversee implementation in school-based, private provider and Head Start settings.</p> <p>By the end of the grant:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The 19 target school districts are implementing the program and learning standards, and are equipped to use comprehensive assessment systems, kindergarten entry assessments, as well as support children with disabilities and English language learners.</li> <li>2. 60% of preschool children with disabilities in the school districts are served in inclusive, general education settings.</li> <li>3. Classroom level quality reaches a 5.0 or higher on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R).</li> <li>4. 100% of teachers in all settings, including Head Start and Private Provider settings, have their Preschool to Third Grade (P-3) certificates.</li> <li>5. At kindergarten entry, all teachers are using Teaching Strategies GOLD® (TS GOLD®).</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Key Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A State university will be selected to conduct a community needs assessment in each community (based on the early learning and program standards that define the High-Quality State Preschool Program) to determine optimal configuration, and to develop a program plan that describes how each component will be implemented.</li> </ul>	<p><b>When:</b> 4/2015 to 8/2015</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School districts submit plans and budgets based on needs assessments, in consultation with Early Childhood (EC) Specialists who review, approve, and track plans.</li> <li>• School districts choose a curriculum and begin training through the Early Learning Training Academy (Training Academy).</li> <li>• District, Head Start and private provider teachers receive scholarships to enroll in P-3 certification programs. Teacher assistants receive scholarships to enroll in associates’ degree or Child Development Associates programs.</li> <li>• All sites enroll in Grow NJ Kids (GNJK), New Jersey’s Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System.</li> <li>• A State university will be selected to conduct Spring assessments to check progress.</li> <li>• EC Specialists assist school districts to evaluate the extent to which each High-Quality component is in place using the Self-Assessment and Validation System (SAVS).</li> <li>• Teachers begin to use the New Jersey Kindergarten Entry Assessment (NJKEA) to inform instruction in kindergarten and to inform focus areas in preschool.</li> </ul>	<p>7/2015, and each Fall</p> <p>9/2015 to 8/2016, and each year after</p> <p>Begin 8/2015, ongoing</p> <p>7/2015 to 9/2015</p> <p>Year 1: Fall/Spring Years 2-4: Spring</p> <p>5/2016 to 8/2016, and on an annual basis</p> <p>9/2016 to 8/2017</p>
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**Plan for Expanding and Improving High-Quality Preschool Programs in Each High-Need Community (Section D)**

**Goal:**  
Expand the number of Eligible Children served by school districts in High-Need Communities while also improving existing slots already offered to both Eligible Children and other preschool-aged children in the community. School districts will oversee implementation in school-based, private provider and Head Start settings.

By the end of the grant:

1. Engage in MOU’s with 19 school district Subgrantees with underserved Eligible Children to both increase available High-Quality slots and improve existing slots.
2. Subgrant 95% of grant funding (\$66.5 million over 4 years) to 19 school districts to serve Eligible Children in district, private provider, and Head Start settings.
3. Serve an additional 1,248 Eligible Children in High-Quality Preschool Programs with Preschool Expansion Grant funding.
4. Improve existing slots for 729 Eligible Children and 338 other children in High-Quality Preschool

Programs by limiting class sizes, decreasing child to staff ratios, extending the program day, providing Comprehensive Services, and employing/compensating teachers with bachelor’s degrees and preschool certification.

5. Implement a sustainability plan to maintain and expand the new and improved slots created throughout the grant period.

<b>Key Activities:</b>	<b>When:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Division of Early Childhood Education staff (Early Childhood Specialists) create Memoranda of Understanding with school districts that describe each party’s obligations in establishing High-Quality Preschool Programs.</li> </ul>	1/2015 to 3/2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four-year Preschool Program Plans and budgets are approved, and the targets for both new and improved slots are set.</li> </ul>	7/2015 to 8/2015, and each year in the Fall
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs serve 437 Eligible Children in improved High-Quality Preschool Program slots along with 203 other children, and 749 Eligible Children in new High-Quality Preschool Program slots.</li> </ul>	9/2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs serve 547 Eligible Children in improved High-Quality Preschool Program slots along with 254 other children, and 936 Eligible Children in new High-Quality Preschool Program slots.</li> </ul>	9/2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs serve 620 Eligible Children in improved High-Quality Preschool Program slots along with 287 other children, and 1,061 Eligible Children in new High-Quality Preschool Program slots.</li> </ul>	9/2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs serve 729 Eligible Children in improved High-Quality Preschool Program slots along with 338 other children, and 1,248 Eligible Children in new High-Quality Preschool Program slots.</li> </ul>	9/2018

**Plan to Ensure That Each Subgrantee is Effectively Implementing High-Quality Preschool Programs (Section E)**

**Goal:**  
 Create a system of oversight and collaboration to ensure that the components of New Jersey’s High-Quality Preschool Program are in place. School districts will oversee implementation in school-based, private provider and Head Start settings.

By the end of the grant:

1. All 19 target school districts and participating private and Head Start providers are implementing the components of the High-Quality State Preschool Program.
2. Reach 59% of Eligible Children and 33% of all four-year-olds in Subgrantee communities.
3. Include the participating schools and providers in the High-Quality State Preschool Program’s monitoring

system for both fiscal practices and the implementation of quality components.

<b>Key Activities:</b>	<b>When:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the results of the university needs assessment to gain an understanding of the specific needs of the community, available resources and to determine where children will be served, and what quality improvements will be needed, including minor facilities improvements to ensure safe and appropriate learning environments.</li> </ul>	7/2015 to 8/2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School district programs (private provider, Head Start and school) make quality improvements.</li> </ul>	9/2015 to 8/2016, and throughout the grant period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District fiscal staff regularly review private provider and Head Start budgets and quarterly expenditure reports, and verify whether expenditures are reasonable, and administrative costs are low.</li> </ul>	Starting 9/2015 and at least quarterly going forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family engagement staff (Community Parent Involvement Specialists (CPIS), social workers and family workers) in school, Head Start and private provider settings use Central Intake hubs and County Councils for Young Children (CCYC) to connect families to Comprehensive Services and to identify hard-to-reach families.</li> </ul>	6/2015 to 9/2015, and each year going forward
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District sites work with EC Specialists to participate in quality improvement efforts (Grow NJ Kids (GNJK), NJ’s TQRIS, Self-Assessment and Validation System (SAVS), third party evaluations, and receive training from the Training Academy).</li> </ul>	9/2015 to 8/2016, and throughout the grant period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Transition Team (consisting of school district staff, community-based private providers, Head Start, Early Intervention staff, etc) creates a Transition Plan that spells out specific strategies to ensure smooth transitions from preschool to kindergarten.</li> </ul>	7/2015, and each year in the Fall, with an annual update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance (OFAC) conducts random audits of participating private providers and Head Start programs.</li> </ul>	9/2017 and 9/2018

**Plan for Alignment Within a Birth Through Third Grade Continuum (Section F)**

**Goal :**  
 Create a system that ensures a smooth transition for children and their families throughout the birth to third grade continuum, resulting in increased learning at third grade.

By the end of the grant:

1. All providers and schools are connected to Central Intake hubs.
2. All providers and schools are using CCYCs to get feedback on initiatives.
3. Participating programs implement the elements of the High-Quality State Preschool Program and GNJK. Sites serving High-Need children from birth to age three implement GNJK.
4. Each school district has a plan for preschool to kindergarten transition.
5. Teachers enroll in the Kindergarten Seminar and implement the NJKEA to improve the efficacy of kindergarten classrooms.
6. Family engagement activities are extended in the early elementary years to promote continued parent involvement.
7. Program standards, curricula and assessments are aligned from preschool through third grade.
8. Teachers and administrators implement optimal instructional practices throughout the early grades.

<b>Key Activities:</b>	<b>When:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Training Academy provides training to Community Parent Involvement Specialists, social workers and family workers to connect providers and schools with Central Intake hubs to ensure that families can access programs and services.</li> </ul>	6/2015 to 9/2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPISs connect participating school districts (schools, private providers and Head Start) with CCYCs.</li> </ul>	1/2016 to 6/2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programs implement the components of the High-Quality State Preschool Program, including GNJK.</li> </ul>	9/2015, ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers implement the NJKEA to measure the impact of preschool programs and to inform instruction prospectively. NJKEA data is integrated into the state longitudinal data system (NJ SMART).</li> </ul>	9/2016 to 8/2017 9/2017 to 8/2018 9/2018 to 8/2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating school districts establish Transition Teams with subcommittee on preschool-to-kindergarten transitions.</li> </ul>	9/2015 to 6/2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District teachers integrate the Strengthening Families (SF) Protective Factor Survey into the first meeting with families at the beginning of the kindergarten school year.</li> </ul>	9/2016 to 8/2017 9/2017 to 8/2018 9/2018 to 8/2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participating school districts take part in the Kindergarten Seminar, and receive training on best practices to support math and reading and social-emotional development from first through third grade.</li> </ul>	7/2016 to 9/2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) aligns the three sets of standards (Birth through Three; Preschool, and Kindergarten).</li> </ul>	9/2014 to 6/2016

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rutgers University prepares teachers and leaders to provide high-quality kindergarten and first through third grade practices by providing direct and web-based professional development.</li> </ul>	9/2016 to 6/2019
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**Plan for Supporting a Continuum of Early Learning and Development (Competitive Preference Priority 2)**

<p><b>Goal :</b> Ensure that the early experiences of children are maximized, that transitions are smooth and that the benefits to children are sustained in kindergarten and the early elementary years.</p> <p>By the end of the grant:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All school districts, Head Start and private providers are accessing Central Intake hubs and have representatives on the County Councils for Young Children.</li> <li>All school districts have a Transition Team in place that includes essential community members.</li> <li>All participating schools, Head Start and private providers are enrolled in GNJK.</li> <li>Other programs in the community serving infants and toddlers are enrolled in GNJK.</li> <li>All participating schools and providers are receiving professional development from the Training Academy, are implementing the SF Protective Factors Framework, and have administered the appropriate health and developmental screenings on all children at school entry.</li> <li>All teachers and administrators are enrolled in the Kindergarten Seminar and using the Kindergarten Guidelines.</li> <li>All teachers are using TS GOLD®, the NJKEA.</li> <li>Teachers are beginning to implement the First through Third Grade Guidelines.</li> </ol>
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<b>Key Activities:</b>	<b>When:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on the needs assessment, programs serving High-Need infants and toddlers in each community are encouraged to participate in GNJK (and associated trainings through the Training Academy).</li> </ul>	7/2015 to 9/2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition Teams are established and represent all critical partners (parents, preschool providers, Head Start providers, principals, community leaders, Early Intervention staff, school personnel, Family Success Centers, Child Care Resource &amp; Referral Agency staff).</li> </ul>	9/2015 to 12/2015
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District schools, providers and Head Start begin receiving Year 1 professional development from the Training Academy, based on their SAVS and GNJK site-level self-assessment, and external evaluation, including screening for developmental and health concerns.</li> </ul>	9/2015 to 8/2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching Strategies provides training in the NJKEA for the first half of the teachers, and the DECE provides training in the Kindergarten Seminar.</li> </ul>	9/2016 to 8/2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching Strategies provides training in the NJKEA for the second half of the</li> </ul>	9/2017 to 8/2018

teachers, and the DECE provides training in the Kindergarten Seminar.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rutgers University provides training in the First through Third Grade Guidelines to the first half of participating teachers.</li> </ul>	9/2016 to 8/2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rutgers University provides training in the First through Third Grade Guidelines to the second half of participating teachers.</li> </ul>	9/2017 to 8/2018

***(1) Build on the State’s progress to date as demonstrated in selection criterion (B);***

All of the essential pieces are in place to implement the High-Quality State Preschool Program in 19 additional school districts. We have a means to connect families to the Comprehensive Services for which they are eligible, and to recruit and engage families (homeless, migrant, military) that are typically hard-to-reach (county-level Central Intake hubs). We have carefully designed program standards that define what programs and providers need to do to create High-Quality Preschool Programs (see (A)(4), page 12 and (B)(4), page 27), and regulations that support the implementation of each high-quality component (see Section (B)(3), page 23). We are in the process of aligning our standards from infancy through third grade, using funding from our Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant. The early learning standards (Birth to Three Early Learning Standards, Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards) are evidence-based and high-quality; reflect all essential domains of school readiness; and are designed for use with English language learners and children with disabilities (for details see (B)(1), page 21 and Attachments 1 and 2 on Appendix page 4 and 71).

We have remained financially committed to the High-Quality State Preschool Program (see Section (B)(2), page 22). In fact, New Jersey is one of the few states that increased its funding during difficult financial times (NIEER State of Preschool Yearbook, 2012). Our continued commitment to serving young children is also reflected in our highest funding level to date (\$652.8 million, SFY 2015 Appropriations Act).

We have a system of planning, evaluation and improvement that we have used, and will continue to use, to elevate the quality of the High-Quality State Preschool Program, and that will be applied to these additional 19 High-Need Communities. Most importantly, we have evidence that shows that the program components, when administered together, result in significant learning benefits for children (Abbott Preschool Longitudinal Effects Study, Fifth Grade Findings, Barnett et. al, 2013, Attachment 3 on Appendix page 182). With Preschool Expansion

Grant funds, we bring these effective practices to 19 additional school districts and to 1,977 Eligible Children.

***(2) Provide voluntary, High-Quality Preschool Programs for Eligible Children through subgrants to each Subgrantee in two or more High-Need Communities;***

New Jersey has a strong history of establishing and sustaining High-Quality Preschool Programs within High-Need Communities. The New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan includes 19 High-Need Communities in 12 counties throughout the State. These 19 communities were asked to participate based on a number of factors, including number of Eligible Children, third grade reading scores, and the need for improved and/or new High-Quality Preschool Program slots (for details see (D)(1), page 59; and (D)(3), page 69). Starting in the Fall of 2015, Subgrantee school districts will use State and Expansion Grant funding to offer voluntary, High-Quality Preschool Program slots to both Eligible Children and other children, using a mixed-delivery system of district, community provider and Head Start classrooms. We will subgrant 95 percent of grant funding each year to increase the number of new slots being offered to Eligible Children, while also helping the school districts to use current State funding to improve existing slots to a larger subsection of the preschool population served (for details see (D)(4), page 72).

***(3) Increase the number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs during each year of the grant period through the creation of new, and the improvement of existing State Preschool Program slots, as applicable;***

The New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan represents a bold expansion of both new and improved slots for Eligible Children. For each year of the grant period, additional High-Quality slots will be available for Eligible Children in each of the 19 participating school districts. The first year of the grant will realize the largest increase in total slots offered, as districts convert current space into High-Quality classrooms. The next three years of the grant period will see smaller increases, but still a steady augmentation of new and improved slots as districts use a needs assessment to find additional appropriate space for new classrooms (for details see (D)(4)(a), page 72; and (D)(4)(b), page 74).

We plan to improve a total of 1,067 preschool slots while also adding 1,248 new slots. This equates to 1,977 new/improved slots for Eligible Children, and 338 improved slots for other preschool-aged children in these communities. In all, the percentage of four-year-olds served in

these High-Need Communities will increase from 33 percent to 45 percent. More importantly, the percentage of Eligible Children served will increase from 33 percent to 59 percent (for details see (D)(4)(b)(i), page 75; and (D)(4)(b)(ii), page 76).

***(4) Have all the characteristics specified in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs;***

All providers and schools in the High-Quality State Preschool Program adhere to carefully designed program and learning standards. These program and learning standards are detailed in five essential documents that drive the High-Quality State Preschool Program’s implementation for schools and providers. They are at the heart of the High-Quality Program, drawing from best practice and research. Together they describe each of the necessary components of the High-Quality State Preschool Program, from teacher-child interaction and curriculum to the measurement of child progress in order to inform instruction. The five documents are described below, and discussed in greater detail within applicable grant sections.

- New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards—what children should know and be able to do, and how teachers can support learning and development (Attachment 2 on Appendix page 71).
- Grow NJ Kids—what individual schools and providers (including Head Start) should do to create a High-Quality Preschool Program (Attachment 4 on Appendix page 185).
- Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines—what programs should do to create a High-Quality Preschool Program (Attachment 5 on Appendix page 221).
- New Jersey Administrative Code, 6A:13A: Elements of High-Quality Preschool Programs—each required program component (Attachment 6 on Appendix page 272).
- Self-Assessment and Validation System (SAVS)—an annual, program-wide measure of the implementation of each program component (Attachment 7 on Appendix page 274).

In summary, the components of quality that are provided by the High-Quality State Preschool Program are as follows:

- A certified teacher and assistant for each class of 15 children (provider and Head Start teachers will receive scholarships to support their certification);
- Instructional salaries that are comparable to school district salaries;

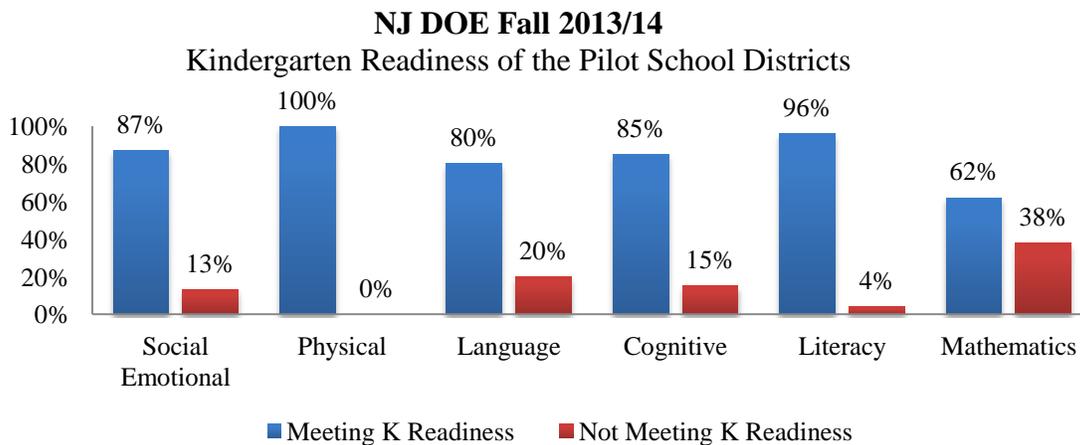
- Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant comprehensive curriculum (e.g., HighScope, Tools of the Mind, Creative Curriculum and Curiosity Corner) and assessment (e.g., TS GOLD®, Child Observation Record, or Work Sampling System), that is aligned with the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards;
- Professional development that is based on results of evaluations and supported by coaches;
- District and private/Head Start provider collaboration (via district/provider contracts);
- A Full-Day (6-hour educational day), 180-day program;
- Inclusion of children with disabilities, with individual accommodations;
- Support for home languages of English language learners (ELL) providing dual language classrooms whenever possible;
- Coaches (master teachers) for in-class follow up, with inclusion and ELL coaches;
- Support for preschool children with potential difficulties and for children with disabilities (pre intervention and referral staff);
- Partnerships that promote families’ access to services that support learning and development (family-led county councils, Family Success Centers, Central Intake hubs);
- Comprehensive Services for diverse families (via family workers, CPISs, and social workers);
- Fiscal monitoring and supports;
- Support for healthy children including the use of evidence-based health and safety standards (with supports from health professionals); and
- A continuous evaluation and improvement cycle.

***(5) Set expectations for the school readiness of children upon kindergarten entry (see also Section (C)(2)(c));***

Expectations for the school readiness of children upon kindergarten entry will be based on the pilot of TS GOLD® that was conducted last year, in addition to the more recent data collected in Fall 2014. The first chart below shows “Raw Scores for K GOLD® Readiness”, based on research conducted by Teaching Strategies. These are the cumulative scores for each domain that represent how entering kindergarteners should perform. The second chart shows children’s performance upon entry to kindergarten in the Fall of the 2013-2014 school year (our

pilot year). Once we have the new data, which will be collected on October 31<sup>st</sup>, we will set targets that gradually increase expectations for proficiency in terms of the widely held expectations for kindergarten readiness (set by Teaching Strategies).

TS GOLD®	
Cumulative Expected Scores for Each Domain	
Area	Raw Score for K GOLD Readiness
Social Emotional	47
Physical	30
Language	45
Cognitive	49
Literacy	41
Mathematics	35



*\*Please note that only one school rated on the Physical domain for development and learning at the KEA point last year.*

***(6) Be supported by a broad group of stakeholders, including Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and, if applicable, State and local early learning councils; and***

Much like the New Jersey Early Learning Plan described in our RTT-ELC grant, the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan is based on foundational work conducted by the New Jersey

Council for Young Children and its committees (NJCYC), the Inter Departmental Planning Group, and the Early Learning Commission (see Section B on page 24). The New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan is supported by many stakeholders, including the NJCYC, Schools Boards Association, State Board of Education, Head Start, early childhood educators, advocates, early childhood organizations, and legislators (see Attachment 52, page 803). When developing our application we consulted with the NJCYC steering committee, an ad hoc committee and other stakeholders, including private foundations. Many critical entities will play an important role in supporting the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan. Head Start programs will collaborate with participating school districts, and Institutions of Higher Education will prepare teachers. The NJ State Library will reach out to local libraries in each community to help them set up bilingual story hours, and private investors, like Brian Maher and foundations such as The Nicholson Foundation and The Schumann Fund for New Jersey will support the work in the future. See below for a list of stakeholders that submitted letters of support (see Attachment 8, Appendix pages 327 to 360, and Attachment 51, pages 801-802).

<b>Letters of Support</b>
<b>NJ State Board of Education</b>
NJ State Board of Education
<b>Institutions of Higher Education</b>
Atlantic Cape Community College
Kean University
Montclair State University
New Jersey City University
Passaic County Community College
Rider University
Thomas Edison State University
Warren County Community College
<b>Community-Based Organizations</b>
Advocates for Children of New Jersey
Disabilities Rights New Jersey
<b>Commissions</b>
Early Learning Commission
<b>Foundations/Investors</b>
Brian Maher
Nicholson Foundation

<b>Letters of Support</b>
Schumann Fund for New Jersey
<b>Head Start</b>
Acelero Learning Monmouth & Middlesex Counties
Center for Family Services Head Start
Gateway Community Action Partnership
North Hudson Community Action Corp
The New Jersey Head Start Association
<b>State Legislators</b>
Assemblyman Jack M. Ciattarelli
<b>Professional Associations/Councils</b>
Coalition for Infant Toddler Educators (CITE)
Council of NJ Grantmakers
NJ Association of School Administrators
NJ Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
NJ Council for Young Children
The Council for Exceptional Children, NJ Division for Early Childhood
NJ Early Care and Education Alliance
NJ School Boards Association
<b>Research and Resources</b>
Education Testing Service
National Institute of Early Education Research
NJ State Library
Southern Regional Child Care Resource Center – Service of EIRC
<b>Parents/Families</b>
NJ Parent Teacher Association
<b>Service Organization</b>
Teach for America

***(7) Allocate funds between—***

(a) Activities to build or enhance State Preschool Program infrastructure using no more than five percent of its Federal grant funds received over the grant period on State-level infrastructure including, but not limited to, monitoring and evaluation and other quality-enhancing activities that improve the delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs to Eligible Children; and

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) will use no more than 5% of grant funding over the course of the grant period to support State-level infrastructure. Each year, at

least 95% of grant funding will be subgranted to the 19 High-Need Communities included in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan. Improved state infrastructure costs will include 3 state-level staff (EC Specialists) to provide direct technical assistance to Subgrantees. The EC Specialists will each work intensely with a group of Subgrantees to ensure that all elements of the High-Quality Preschool Program are being delivered. Included in this role will be an annual review of each Subgrantee's Four-year Preschool Program Plan and Budget, as well as the annual SAVS (for details see Table A (Excel Workbook), (G)(1), page 122; and Budget Narrative, page 126).

The NJDOE will also use grant funding to support the cost of a baseline needs assessment in each High-Need Community during the first year of the grant through a Memorandum of Understanding with a State college or university. Subgrantees will use the results of the needs assessment to identify developmentally appropriate classroom spaces for new and improved High-Quality Preschool Program slots (for further details see Budget Narrative, page 126; and (G)(1), page 122).

In the Fall of 2015, grant funding will be used to conduct a baseline, site-level evaluation of the quality of Subgrantee classrooms in district, community provider and Head Start settings. For each subsequent year of the grant, a follow-up evaluation will monitor the improvement of classroom quality across the 19 High-Need Communities (for further details see Budget Narrative, page 126; and (G)(1), page 122).

Finally, the NJDOE will use grant funding to provide teacher scholarships. We know that all current teachers in Subgrantee programs have a bachelor's degree and P-3 Certification or equivalent. However, during each year of the grant, teachers in private provider and Head Start will receive scholarship funding to assist in attaining P-3 Certification. Teacher assistants will also be eligible for scholarships to assist in attaining an associates' degree or Child Development Associates degree (for details see Budget Narrative, page 126; and (G)(1), page 122).

(b) Subgrants to Early Learning Providers to implement voluntary, High-Quality Preschool Programs for Eligible Children in one or more High-Need Communities, including how it will--

(i) Provide High-Quality Preschool Programs to Eligible Children no later than the end of year one of the grant period;

All Subgrantees will begin serving Eligible Children by September of 2015. Prior to that time, from January through August of 2015, Subgrantees will assess existing space in district settings and in contracted community provider and Head Start settings, to identify suitable space for High-Quality Preschool Program classrooms, as well as any minor remodeling that may be needed to ensure that these spaces meet all safety standards for preschool-aged children. We estimate that at least 1,186 slots (improved and new) will be available to Eligible Children across all 19 Subgrantees within the first year of the grant. Additional slots will be added in each subsequent year of the grant until we meet our goal of 729 improved slots and 1,248 new slots for Eligible Children, and 338 improved slots for other preschool children (for details see Table A (Excel Workbook); and (D)(4)(a), page 72).

(ii) Subgrant at least 95 percent of its Federal grant funds to its Subgrantee or Subgrantees over the grant period; and

For each year of the grant period, the NJDOE will subgrant at least 95% of grant funding to the 19 High-Need Communities participating in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan. We will provide grant funding at a per child level that is commensurate with New Jersey's existing High-Quality State Preschool Program. In grant years 1-3, each Subgrantee (including participating private providers and Head Start programs) will receive additional grant funding for minor classroom repairs, as well as startup classroom materials, supplies and technology for new classrooms. During these years, Subgrantees will also work with the EC Specialists to identify ways in which grant funding can be used for targeted professional development. The need for grant funding above the per child rate is estimated to decrease proportionally throughout the grant period, as fewer new classrooms are opened, and as professional development needs stabilize. By grant year 4, we anticipate that the funding embedded within the per child rate for professional development, repairs, and classroom materials and supplies will be sufficient to maintain High-Quality classrooms through the final year of the grant (for details see Table A (Excel Workbook); (G)(1), page 122; and Budget Narrative, page 126).

(iii) Support each Subgrantee in culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach and communication efforts in order to ensure that all families, including those who are isolated or otherwise hard to reach, are informed of the opportunity and encouraged to enroll their children in available programs.

We have had a great deal of documented success delivering the High-Quality State Preschool Program to a diverse population of preschool children (see (E)(9) page 93), and with new avenues for finding hard-to-reach families (Central Intake hubs, and CCYCs, see Sections (E), (F) and Competitive Priority #2 Continuum of Early Learning), we will be better equipped to recruit children who will benefit the most from the High-Quality Preschool Program. Special positions, including Community Parent Involvement Specialists, program-wide social workers, and private provider and Head Start family workers will play an important role in recruiting families.

School districts will design recruitment of underserved populations based on the results of an initial community needs assessment that will be conducted in the Spring of 2015, with assistance from a State college or university.

Evidence for selection criterion (A):

- (A)(3) and (A)(7) Information contained in Table A for the number of Eligible Children to be served each year of the grant and the number and percentage of State Preschool Program slots (See Table A in the application package).
- (A)(4) Documentation of the structural elements in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Program.
- (A)(5) Set of expectations for school readiness.
- (A)(6) Letters of support from stakeholders, including Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and, if applicable, State and local early learning councils.
- Any other supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers.

## **Selection Criterion B. Commitment to State Preschool Programs**

The extent to which the State has demonstrated its commitment to develop or enhance the High-Quality State Preschool Program infrastructure and its capacity to both deliver and increase access to High-Quality Preschool Programs for Eligible Children, as evidenced by—

New Jersey’s commitment to using preschool access as a mechanism to close the achievement gap has been heralded as a national model. In fact, New Jersey “has transformed preschools in its poorest urban communities into a high-quality system of pre-K that attracts visitors from around the globe to see world-class early education” (Barnett, 2013). In just the last few years, the State has continued to push further and expand access to high-quality early learning opportunities, while at the same time broadening its focus to take a more inclusive, system-wide approach to improving the lives of its youngest and most vulnerable children; heeding the research that shows disparities begin even before a child is born (Lu et al., 2010).

When we began transforming preschool quality, we were faced with low enrollment, substandard facilities, uncertified teachers, and extremely poor quality early learning environments. A systematic program improvement cycle combined with funding and other resources to support adequate space, small group sizes, curriculum implementation, certified teachers and the other essential components of quality, resulted in a well-prepared early childhood workforce, using research-based practices that meet the needs of our diverse population of young children. With the Preschool Expansion Grant opportunity, we will be able to provide the necessary resources to implement the components of the High-Quality State Preschool Program in communities that are not currently part of our High-Quality State Preschool Program, and will also be able to leverage our Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System, Grow NJ Kids (GNJK, Attachment 4, Appendix page 185), where our combined program and learning standards from each of our State agencies can be found.

Our New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan reflects the shared leadership, collaboration, input, and long-term commitment across four core state agencies—Education (DOE), Children and Families (DCF), Health (DOH), and Human Services (DHS)—and the New Jersey Council for Young Children (NJCYC) that includes our other public, private, state and local partners. Driven by our collective desire to dramatically improve access to high-quality early learning and development programs for low-income, High-Need children, senior staff from DOE, DHS, DCF and DOH (the Interdepartmental Planning Group) and our stakeholders have spent the last few

years expanding the breadth of our understanding of the contributions from each agency that form the essential building blocks of our State's early education and care programs. Genuine collaboration is allowing us to implement Grow NJ Kids, link our data systems, provide cross-sector training through a statewide Training Academy and connect our programs and services (see the Letter of Support from the four commissioners, Attachment 9, Appendix page 361).

***(1) State Early Learning and Development Standards;***

New Jersey has adopted three sets of standards: the *New Jersey Birth to Three Standards* (Attachment 1, on Appendix page 4) for infants and toddlers, the *Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards* (Attachment 2, on Appendix pages 71) for three- and four-year-olds, and the *NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards*, including the *Common Core Standards* (Attachment 10, on Appendix page 362) for grades kindergarten through 12.

Following the State's adoption of the Common Core State Standards, New Jersey revised the math and language arts sections of the preschool standards to better align to the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards and Common Core State Standards, and to align with the Head Start Early Learning Framework. We also added Approaches to Learning to the preschool standards. The NJ State Board of Education approved these standards in July of 2014.

With the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant, the three sets of standards will be aligned from infancy through grade 3, and will be disseminated across sectors to teachers, directors, and principals, as well as professionals in social services and health settings, and parents. All sets of standards are evidence-based and high-quality; reflect all essential domains of school readiness; and are designed for use with English language learners and children with disabilities (see reviews of the standards on Attachments 11, 12 and 13 on Appendix pages 390, 415, and 417). Complementing the standards are teaching practices that specifically address how to teach the standards. In addition, program standards for both preschool (New Jersey Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines, Attachment 5, on Appendix page 221) and kindergarten (New Jersey Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines, Attachment 14, page 432) help teachers ensure that the standards are met in a developmentally appropriate fashion. The Division of Early Childhood Education, in the New Jersey Department of Education has trained over 600 educational leaders and teachers in these and other P-3 best

practices through ongoing seminars (see Leadership Training syllabus, Attachment 15 on Appendix page 533).

With funding from the RTT-ELC grant, we are developing and implementing the New Jersey First through Third Grade Guidelines (See an outline on Attachment 16, Appendix page 535) through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Rutgers University. The guidelines will include information on pedagogy, center- and project-based learning, specific guidance on implementing and assessing the Common Core State Standards using developmentally appropriate instructional practices, and teacher evaluation. Like our preschool and kindergarten guidelines, the First through Third Grade Guidelines will be available statewide, and will come with modules to support their implementation.

***(2) The State's financial investment, if any, and the estimated number and percentage of children, including if known, the estimated number and percentage of Eligible Children, served in State Preschool Programs over the last four years;***

New Jersey has never wavered in its financial commitment to its youngest and most vulnerable students, even during the peak of the State's economic challenges or when confronted with unexpected expenditures like those associated with Superstorm Sandy. As Table B demonstrates, we have maintained a substantial funding commitment for our State Preschool Program. New Jersey's High-Quality State Preschool Program invests an average of \$13,320 in each preschooler, one of the highest state per pupil rates in the nation. The combined funding for general education students in the High-Quality State Preschool Program and other NJDOE-funded preschool programs has increased steadily every year between FY 2010 and FY 2014, from \$613.3 million to \$648.1 million, a 5.67% increase. New Jersey is one of the few states to increase its funding during the recession (NIEER State of Preschool Yearbook, 2012), and its commitment to serving young children is reflected in increased funding levels for FY2015 (\$652.8 million, SFY 2015 Appropriations Act), and highlighted in the 2013 NIEER Yearbook which ranked New Jersey as the second highest in per pupil spending (NIEER State of Preschool Yearbook, 2013). These figures are reflected in the overall growth in the enrollment of four-year-old High-Need children served by these programs—from 29,961 to 31,020 children—over the same time period, as shown below in Table B, below.

<b>Table B.</b>									
State Fiscal Year	1: State Funding	2: Local Funding	3: Philanthropic /Private Funding (if applicable)	4: Number of Four-Year Old Children	5: Number of Four-Year Olds at or below 200% FPL*	6: Four-Year Olds Served in the State Preschool Program (both the High-Quality and other NJDOE programs)		7: Four-Year Olds at or below 200% FPL Served in the State Preschool Program*	
						#	%	#	%
2014	\$648,070,000	\$0	\$0	104,781	35,626	31,020	30%	22,024	62%
2013	\$633,670,000	\$0	\$0	106,161	36,095	31,234	29%	22,176	61%
2012	\$619,098,000	\$0	\$0	109,731	34,017	30,802	28%	21,869	64%
2011	\$613,330,000	\$0	\$0	110,866	33,260	29,961	27%	21,272	64%

\*New Jersey does not have data on the number of children who are at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. The above numbers represent 185% of the Federal Poverty Level.

In New Jersey, we estimate that there are 35,626 4-year-olds whose families are at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, 22,024 of whom are currently served. In addition, there are 130,665 infants and young children served across a variety of settings that include: the High-Quality State Preschool Programs (both the high-quality and other programs) Early Head Start and Head Start, CCDF subsidized Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Providers, Title I, evidence-based Home Visiting (pregnancy to age three), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C Early Intervention, and IDEA Part B Preschool Special Education. Our New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan will leverage our relationship with these key partners and services to provide a seamless and integrated system of care across multiple sectors (health, early childhood education, Early Intervention, Preschool Special Education, family support, and social services).

***(3) Enacted and pending legislation, policies, or practices that demonstrate the State’s current and future commitment to increasing access to High-Quality Preschool Programs for Eligible Children;***

New Jersey has demonstrated its commitment to high-quality early learning and development programs, coupled with strong policies and support to close the achievement gap for High-Need children. Below, we highlight policies that have had a dramatic impact on the trajectory of early education and care in our State.

Governance

*Executive Order #77*, Early Learning Commission (ELC): In 2011, Governor Chris Christie established the Early Learning Commission by Executive Order (See Attachment 17, on Appendix pages 538) to bring together the four Commissioners in charge of the programs affecting children prenatal to age eight from the DOE, DHS, DCF and DOH. This body is tasked with aligning programs and funding to maximize the impact of supports and services for families and their young children. Table 1 below provides a summary of the programs and services that relate to early learning and development within each of the four departments of the ELC. The Executive Order also led to the creation of the Interdepartmental Planning Group (IPG), comprised of the administrators and senior staff from the four state agencies, and its role is to consider the NJCYC’s recommendations, make plans for implementation and carry out the plans.

**Table 1, Departments Providing Early Childhood Services & Supports**

<b>Education (DOE)</b>	<b>Human Services (DHS)</b>	<b>Children &amp; Families (DCF)</b>	<b>Health (DOH)</b>
Division of EC Education (P-3)	Subsidized child care	Child Care Licensing	Title V Maternal Child Health Block Grant
State Funded Preschool	Child Care Development Block Grant	Family Child Care Registration	Perinatal Risk Assessment—Addiction/Depression
Head Start Collaboration	Wraparound care	NJ Home Visiting Program	Improving Pregnancy Outcomes
Teacher Credential & Licensing	NJ First Steps- Infant Toddler	Central Intake	Central Intake Expansion Community Health Workers
Preschool Special Education (IDEA Part B)	Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies	Help Me Grow-NJ Project LAUNCH	WIC
Federal Title I services for low income families	Child Care Workforce Registry	Infant/EC Mental Health	Services/Breastfeeding
Regional Achievement Centers (RAC)	NJ School Age Child Care (SACC)	Strengthening Families (SF Protective Factors Framework)	Maternal and Child Health/Immunizations
Migrant, Homeless Education	NJ Inclusive Child Care (NJICC)	Pregnant/Parenting Teens Parent-Linking/School-Based Project TEACH-Teen Parents	Home Visiting (Admin lead)
Bilingual Education	WorkFirst NJ-TANF/GA SNAP	Family Success Centers	Early Intervention (IDEA Part C)
Parent Training and Information Center (SPAN)	Emergency Services-Addiction & Mental Health	County Councils for Young Children	Special Child Health Services
NJCYC	Disability Services (parents)	NJ Children’s Trust Fund	Shaping NJ
	NJ Medicaid/NJ Family Care	Federal Community Based Child Abuse Prevention Funds	Lead Poisoning
	Professional Impact New Jersey (Workforce Registry)	Children’s System of Care Child Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities	Indoor Environments Program
		Child Protection & Permanency	

*Executive Order #162*, The New Jersey Council for Young Children (NJCYC, the Council): The NJCYC was created by Executive Order in 2010, and it serves as the State Advisory Council. The 25-member body (see Executive Order 162 and Council membership list, Attachments 18 and 19, on Appendix pages 541 and 544), appointed by the Governor, is charged with making recommendations about all programs for children from prenatal to age eight. It is led by an Executive Director, co-chaired by the Director of the NJDOE's Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE), and serves as the representative entity for the State's early childhood stakeholder community, including advocacy groups, child care organizations, Head Start agencies, school districts, higher education institutions, and foundations, among others. Many of these members represent organizations serving children with High-Needs and their families. The role of the Council is to provide input and advice as New Jersey sets its early education and care agenda (See Attachment 20, Strategic Plan, on Appendix page 547). The work of the NJCYC is conducted by a committee and workgroup structure (Attachment 21, on Appendix page 569). Nearly 100 stakeholders are organized into the six committees: Early Care and Education Workforce, Infant-Child Health, Family and Community Engagement, Early Care and Education Standards, Data, and Communication. Each committee has a Chair, who is responsible for ensuring that the Strategic Plan tasks are accomplished.

#### Court Mandate

*Abbott v. Burke*: As mentioned above, the 1998 State Supreme Court case resulted in a first-in-the-nation focus on balancing school funding inequities in low-income districts by mandating, among other things, high-quality public preschool programs.

#### Regulations

*DOE Administrative Code for Preschool: New Jersey Administrative Code, 6A:13A, Elements of High Quality Preschool Programs*: This code ensures rigorous program standards for preschool programs across settings in the 35 communities currently in the High-Quality State Preschool Program (and will be required for all programs included in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan) by requiring the use of evidence-based curricula and assessments, learning standards, supports for English language learners, inclusion of children with disabilities, family engagement strategies, health supports, staffing to address potentially challenging behaviors, small class sizes, preschool teacher certification, appropriate compensation, and a program evaluation and

improvement system. A Training of Trainers model with embedded supports brings best practices to key school district staff. A self-assessment process (the Self-Assessment and Validation System, Attachment 7 on page 274) evaluates the extent to which each element of high quality is in place. Careful attention is paid to curriculum fidelity and implementation of assessments, and site-level, school district and state-level third party evaluations are regularly conducted to measure implementation.

*DCF Licensing Standards:* New Jersey's licensing standards are ranked among the top in the nation by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) (Child Care Aware, *We Can Do Better* Executive Summary, 2013), providing a solid foundation on which to build. These regulations apply to the 4,200 child care centers in New Jersey serving six or more children.

*DHS Child Care Subsidy Programs:* The NJ Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) provides child care subsidy assistance to low-income working families at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level who are employed full time, in a full time education/training program, or a combination of both. Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) was established to transform the design and purpose of the welfare system in New Jersey. This program supports participants' employment efforts with child care for WFNJ/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)-eligible dependent children during the recipient's period of eligibility for cash assistance, and for the 24 consecutive months following ineligibility for cash assistance as a result of earned income.

*DOE Administrative Code – Special Education:* Whereas many other states rely on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), New Jersey regulations go further. New Jersey Administrative Code, 6A:14, Special Education, adds rigorous requirements for the identification, evaluation, and provision of services in the least restrictive environment to preschoolers with disabilities, in addition to delineating rules for class size, student-teacher ratio, handling transitions between programs, teacher certification, ongoing professional development, measuring preschool outcomes, and parent engagement.

*Policies to support children in homeless families:* New Jersey statutes and administrative code ensure that children in foster care, in a migrant family, or who are homeless, can continue

attending their preschool program with transportation provided to help minimize disruption to their education (*N.J.A.C. 6A:17-2.3; N.J.A.C. 6A:17-2.4; and N.J.S.A. 30:4C-26b; N.J.A.C.10:122C-6.3*).

***(4) The quality of existing State Preschool Programs, as evidenced by policies and program data that demonstrate the State’s commitment to the components of a High-Quality Preschool Program; compliance with Program Standards; and support for program monitoring and improvement, which may be accomplished through the use of a TQRIS;***

All providers and schools in the High-Quality State Preschool Program are required to adhere to carefully designed program and learning standards. These program and learning standards are detailed in five essential documents that drive the High-Quality State Preschool Program’s implementation for schools and providers. The documents draw from best practice and research, and describe each component of a high-quality preschool program, from teacher-child interaction and curriculum to the measurement of child progress in order to inform instruction. They are described in each of the following documents:

- Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards— what children and teachers should know and be able to do (Attachment 2 on Appendix page 71).
- Grow NJ Kids—what individual schools and providers (including Head Start) should do to create a high-quality program (Attachment 4 on Appendix page 185).
- Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines—what programs should do to create a high-quality program (Attachment 5 on Appendix page 221).
- New Jersey Administrative Code, 6A:13A, Elements of High-Quality Preschool Programs —each required program component (Attachment 6 on Appendix page 272).
- Self-Assessment and Validation System—an annual measure of the implementation of each component of a high-quality preschool program (Attachment 7 on Appendix page 274).

Within these documents the key requirements of the High-Quality State Preschool Program are described, as follows:

- Certified teacher and assistant for each class of 15 children (provider and Head Start teachers will receive scholarships to support their certification);
- Instructional salaries that are comparable to school district salaries;

- Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically relevant comprehensive curriculum (districts choose from High/Scope, Tools of the Mind, Creative Curriculum and Curiosity Corner) and assessment (TS GOLD®, Child Observation Record, or Work Sampling System), that is aligned with the Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards;
- Professional development that is based on results of evaluations and supported by coaches;
- District/provider collaboration (district/provider contracts);
- Full-Day (6-hour educational day), 180-day program;
- Inclusion of children with disabilities, with individual accommodations;
- Coaches (master teachers) for in-class follow up, with inclusion and English language learner (ELL) coaches;
- Support for home languages of English language learners (dual language classrooms whenever possible)
- Support for preschool children with potential difficulties and for children with disabilities (pre intervention and referral staff);
- Partnerships that promote families' access to services that support learning and development;
- Comprehensive Services for diverse families (family workers, community parent involvement specialists);
- Fiscal monitoring and supports (fiscal specialists);
- Support for healthy children including the use of evidence-based health and safety standards (with support from nurses); and
- Continuous evaluation and improvement cycle.

### **How New Jersey tracks progress**

Annual program monitoring plays a critical role in the High-Quality State Preschool Program's quality and efficacy using a cycle of evaluation and improvement. At each level (child, classroom, site, district and state), the extent to which each of the program components is implemented is measured at least annually. Professional development and program changes are derived from these evaluations.

### Child level

- Children are screened upon entry to the High-Quality State Preschool Program, and their progress in the classroom is tracked using performance-based assessments that help teachers adjust instruction.

### Classroom level

- Teachers, coaches and building administrators/provider directors use tools to evaluate classroom practices, interactions, and activities (e.g. Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R); Supports for Early Literacy Assessment (SELA); Preschool Rating Inventory of Science and Mathematics (PRISM); Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS); and Curriculum-specific fidelity tools).

### Site/Program level

- Starting this Fall, providers and schools across the State, including in all State-funded preschool programs, will participate in GNJK. The rollout will be over 6 years, with 120 new providers and schools enrolling each year from the High-Quality State Preschool Program alone. Participating Early Learning Providers that will be funded through the Preschool Expansion Grant will be required to use GNJK. At the end of the grant, we will have an estimated 1,790 providers participating across all early learning settings (Head Start, Early Head Start, State Preschool, Child Care, Family Child Care, Private Schools for Children with Disabilities, etc.).

### District level

School districts assess the implementation of each program component through:

- A self-assessment (with a validation component). The Self-Assessment Validation System (SAVS) measures the implementation of each component of the Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines and Code.
- Summaries of both classroom evaluations and child performance to inform areas of need and professional development.

### State level

Classroom quality and child progress are carefully monitored through:

- Aggregate scores and ratings from GNJK (prospectively).
- University-conducted structured evaluations of classroom quality in a random sample of classrooms every other year.

- University-conducted tracking of child outcomes over time.
- Summaries and analysis of district-reported SAVS data, classroom evaluations and child performance.
- Analysis of the number of children served, rates of inclusion, and teacher qualifications.
- Audits of fiscal practices.

Results of evaluations

New Jersey’s High-Quality State Preschool Program has been the subject of much research over the years. Serving 43,560 general education preschoolers and 1,620 preschoolers with disabilities included in general education classrooms in 35 High-Need Communities, the High-Quality State Preschool Program now boasts consistently high-quality classrooms (See New Jersey Preschool Quality Evaluation Study, Spring 2013, and Spring 2014, Attachments 22 and 23, on Appendix pages 571 and 586, and Table 2 below) with proven benefits for children’s learning and development at kindergarten entry and beyond. Average ECERS-R scores have been above a 5.0 since 2007.

<b>ECERS-R SUBSCALE</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2013*</b>	<b>2014</b>
Space & furnishings	3.76	4.00	4.57	4.72	4.90	5.03	5.03	5.16	5.05	5.17
Personal care	3.69	4.20	4.47	4.16	4.30	4.29	4.34	4.49	4.63	4.12**
Language	4.27	4.57	4.97	5.03	5.08	5.46	5.56	5.84	4.74	4.90
Activities	3.37	3.64	4.12	4.34	4.62	4.85	4.86	5.00	5.10	5.01
Interactions	4.92	5.44	5.98	5.93	6.16	6.44	6.33	5.98	6.17	6.22
Program structure	4.04	4.67	4.91	5.02	5.41	5.41	5.45	5.41	5.92	6.04
Parents & staff	4.37	4.63	5.17	5.19	5.38	5.59	5.77	5.75	5.95	5.88
<b>ECERS Overall</b>	<b>3.96</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>4.77</b>	<b>4.81</b>	<b>5.03</b>	<b>5.20</b>	<b>5.23</b>	<b>5.30</b>	<b>5.31</b>	<b>5.41</b>

\*Only school districts that were still under a 5.0 on the ECERS-R were included this year.

\*\*This subscale was removed from the overall average because of changes to the subscale that brought the scores down significantly.

The most in-depth, longitudinal study of the program was conducted by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) at Rutgers University, with the most recent update published in March 2013 (See Attachment 3, on Appendix page 182, Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study, Fifth Grade Follow-Up, 2013). This study compared the progress of fifth graders who in 2005 attended New Jersey's High-Quality State Preschool Program, to children who did not attend. The study tracked 70% of the cohort through fifth grade using the New Jersey's Statewide Longitudinal Data System, NJ SMART, by analyzing test scores in grades 4 and 5 for Language Arts/Literacy (LAL), Math and Science, as well as retention and special education placement. The findings were dramatic:

- Children who attended the High-Quality State Preschool Program had significantly better achievement in LAL, Math and Science, with the effect of one year of preschool equivalent to a 10-20% advantage, and two years of preschool equivalent to a 20-40% gain.
- In fifth grade, preschool participants were roughly three-quarters of a year ahead of children who did not attend the High-Quality State Preschool Program.
- Grade retention and special education rates were also reduced for High-Quality State Preschool Program participants.

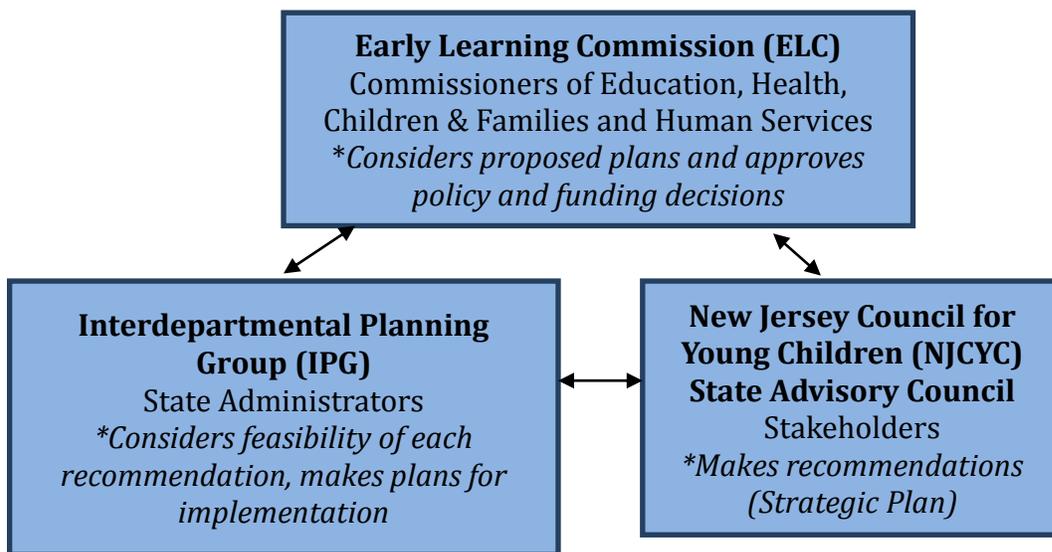
Gains such as these have been found to extend far beyond the early years, producing a host of life-long benefits, including both social and economic success as adults (Schweinhart et al. 1993; Ramey & Campbell 1984; Reynolds 2000).

***(5) The State's coordination of preschool programs and services, in partnership with its Early Learning Advisory Council, with other State and Federal resources that may be used to serve preschool-aged children, including, if applicable, programs and services supported by title I of the ESEA, part C and section 619 of part B of IDEA, subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act, the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.), and the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858 et seq.); and***

New Jersey has a system of interagency coordination and streamlined decision-making that assures that the needs of infants, young children and their families take precedence and do not become lost within the silos of a particular agency. Instead, we have organized ourselves to optimize the use of existing program and funding resources.

The diagram below shows our current structure, which is anchored by three entities: the New Jersey Council for Young Children, the Inter Departmental Planning Group and the Early Learning Commission.

**The Structure of Early Education and Care in New Jersey**



Our coordination work occurs at monthly IPG meetings where we consider the feasibility of aligning our funding and programs, discuss our progress in the implementation of our cross-agency plans, and problem-solve issues spanning multiple agencies and programs. The NJCYC provides input and feedback to inform IPG recommendations, and the ELC makes the final policy and funding decisions. The results of our efforts can be seen in the blended programs and funding streams across all NJDOE-funded preschool programs, Title I, Head Start, the Child Care Block Grant, IDEA part B, IDEA part C, the McKinney-Vento Act, the cross-sector implementation of GNJK, and the implementation of the projects that are part of our RTT-ELC grant (discussed in more detail in (B)(6)). All of these programs are represented within both the NJCYC and the IPG .

Below is a description of specific coordination efforts for programs serving preschool-aged children:

**Title I**

We work closely with our Office of Title I to coordinate Title I funding and services. Annually, the Department’s Offices of Supplemental Educational Programs and Grants Management provide technical assistance to districts on the development of their Title I

application. Districts with school-wide programs that have not received funding at the level of the High-Quality State Preschool Program sometimes use their Title I funds to provide preschool and to provide training in some of the High-Quality components (e.g. curriculum). In all cases, the school districts have identified an achievement gap in kindergarten, and established a school-wide preschool program for all preschoolers in the school. Title I funds are also used for parent involvement activities as defined by the ESEA (section 1118). Title I promotes the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving child learning and development and other school activities, including ensuring that:

- Parents play an integral role in assisting with their child’s learning;
- Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school; and
- Parents are full partners in their child’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.

#### McKinney-Vento Act

Head Start and the High-Quality State Preschool Program both have communication and coordination procedures in place to ensure smooth transitions for homeless children and their families. School district and provider family services personnel (e.g., Community Parent Involvement Specialists, social workers, family workers) connect the school district homeless education liaison with classroom teachers, teacher assistants, school counselors, nurses, secretaries, bus drivers, and administrators, as necessary. Information on homelessness is readily available to staff, and many school districts offer annual training on the specialized and unique needs of children experiencing homelessness. Community social service agencies serve on the school district’s early childhood advisory council and other school committees addressing early childhood education. Data obtained from registration forms and interviews is used to determine the best placements for preschool children in school, Head Start, and provider settings (see Guidance on Serving Homeless Children, Attachment 24 on Appendix page 599).

#### Child Care Program

The Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development (DFD), the agency that administers the Child Care Block Grant, and the DECE, have had a successful partnership that began in 2001, during the initial stages of implementation of the High-Quality State Preschool Program. Though the eligibility requirements for participating families have changed

to require that parents work or go to school at least 25 hours per week, DFD contributes \$18.6 million in state funds for before and after school care for children in the High-Quality State Preschool Program.

### IDEA Part C

The Lead Agency for the New Jersey Early Intervention System (NJEIS) under the Individuals for Disabilities Education Act (Part C) is under the New Jersey Department of Health, Division for Family Health Services. NJEIS is responsible for implementing New Jersey's statewide system of Early Intervention services for infants and toddlers, birth to age three, with developmental delays or disabilities, and their families.

The NJEIS Part C Coordinator participates in the activities of the New Jersey Council for Young Children (NJCYC), the Interdepartmental Planning Group and the Race to the Top, Early Learning Challenge grant. In addition, both the Part C and Part B coordinators serve on the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) (the Governor appointed Part C advisory council to the NJEIS), providing an important connection to the NJCYC.

### Section 619 of Part B of IDEA

An important component of our High-Quality State Preschool Program is the inclusion of preschool children with disabilities in general education settings to the maximum extent possible. We know that a preschool classroom is an optimal environment to support children with disabilities' individual needs, because of the wide range of skills, interests and abilities typical of this age group. We are also committed to ensuring that adaptations and supports for preschoolers with disabilities are carried out in the context of the curriculum's daily activities, interactions and routines.

Early Childhood Specialists from the DECE work closely with our IDEA Part B Coordinator to ensure that preschoolers with disabilities are included in general education classrooms to the maximum extent possible. The Part B Coordinator is often included in SAVS visits and regularly advises programs on best practices for including preschoolers with disabilities. As a result of this work, 1,947 out of 3,063 (64%) preschool children with disabilities are currently included in general education classrooms in New Jersey's High-Quality State Preschool Program. IDEA funding is used together with State preschool funding

to provide the High-Quality Preschool Program for preschoolers with disabilities and general education preschoolers in the same classrooms.

### Head Start

Our relationship with the Office of Head Start Collaboration has resulted in almost 5,000 three- and four-year-olds benefitting from the quality components of both Head Start and High-Quality State Preschool Programs. With braided programming and funding, the highest standard from each program applies. Children in a combined Head Start/State Preschool site, have certified teachers, and small class sizes of 15, as required by the State Preschool Program, and they also have the comprehensive health, social and educational services provided by Head Start such as those found in the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Interactive Framework. In addition, Head Start teachers benefit from the High-Quality State Preschool Program's requirement for comparable compensation based on the school district's salary scale.

***(6) The State's role in promoting coordination of preschool programs and services at the State and local levels with other sectors that support the early learning and development of children, including child health, mental health, family support, nutrition, child welfare, and adult education and training sectors.***

### State level

Table 1 (on page 24 above) illustrates the structure of Early Care and Education in New Jersey. While there are many programs and services offered across the State agencies, federal/national initiatives like the RTT-ELC, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS), Help Me Grow, and Project LAUNCH and have helped us streamline and coordinate resources. For example, all four State agencies are supporting the implementation of Grow NJ Kids by recruiting participants from the State Preschool Program, Head Start, Early Head Start, center-based child care (CCDF), family child care, programs serving preschool children with disabilities, including self-contained settings, and related child-serving settings (e.g. family resource centers, child welfare services, etc.).

A recent collaboration within early education and care is with our New Jersey Home Visiting program. The NJ Home Visiting program is a strong interdepartmental collaboration between DOH, DCF, and DHS and also collaborates with Early Head Start. It now has an expanded capacity to serve 5,500 families statewide. Eighty percent of participants reach targets

on nearly all health benchmarks. NJ Home Visiting now has three evidence-based home visiting (HV) models—*Healthy Families*, *Nurse-Family Partnership*, and *Parents as Teachers*—that focus on families from pregnancy to age three; and one model *Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters* for families of three- and four-year-olds. Child development and school readiness are core benchmarks in the Maternal Infant and early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) federal initiative. As a result of our interagency planning, the NJ Home Visiting program is placing a greater emphasis on transition planning from Home Visiting to quality preschool programs.

Since 2008, New Jersey has been working collaboratively across State agencies and with local communities to develop a coordinated network of prenatal/early childhood services. County-level Central Intake hubs now function as a single point of entry to streamline access for pregnant/parenting families, educators, and providers to health care resources, social services, and other community supports in all 21 counties (the last 6 counties are being added with RTT-ELC funding). Several initiatives and funding sources have been aligned to ensure a unified effort in building this comprehensive approach. Planning resources include: 2012 Help Me Grow, 2013 NJ Early Childhood Comprehensive System (ECCS) and 2013 Project LAUNCH grants, also mentioned above.

#### Local level

As part of the RTT-ELC grant, DCF recently released a Request for Proposals to create parent-led county councils that will allow for parent/family input and feedback. Families, along with other local stakeholders, will be invited to participate in County Councils for Young Children (CCYC). CCYCs will help to refine key aspects of Grow NJ Kids by creating a process for family feedback; supporting families as children transition to preschool and kindergarten; facilitating strong social networks with linkages to community supports; and providing authentic opportunities for family involvement in decision making and leadership development that supports children, families and communities. In addition, the state-level NJCYC will partner with local CCYCs on family engagement enhancements, such as father involvement, adult and family literacy, and intergenerational activities.

Evidence for selection criterion (B):

- (B)(1) Executive summary or brief description of the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards, including how the definition is met.
- (B)(2) Completed table that describes the State’s financial investment and number of children served in State Preschool Programs (See Table B in the application package).
- (B)(3) Evidence of enacted and pending legislation, policies, or practices.
- Any other supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers.

### **Selection Criterion C. Ensuring Quality in Preschool Programs**

The extent to which the State has an ambitious and achievable plan to ensure program quality, including a description of how the State will—

To ensure program quality, New Jersey will use the same process used to elevate the quality of the 35 school districts currently in the State’s High-Quality Preschool Program. This process will be augmented by implementation of our TQRIS, Grow NJ Kids (GNJK). By participating in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan, 19 school districts have agreed to follow the program and learning standards used in the State’s High-Quality Preschool Program, and memorialized in our Administrative Code (N.J.A.C., 6A:13A, Elements of High Quality Preschool Programs, Attachment 6 on Appendix page 272) and Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines (Attachment 5 on Appendix page 221). Private providers and Head Start programs working with school districts will agree to the terms of the annual Preschool Provider Contract (Attachment 25 on Appendix page 600), in addition to using GNJK (the quality indicators can be found on Attachment 4 on Appendix page 185) to work through the levels of quality.

In the Spring of the 2015 school year, a needs assessment will be conducted on the available Early Learning Providers (schools, private providers and Head Start programs) in each community. This will inform the Four-year Preschool Program Plan and Budget, which includes how each program component will be achieved. Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) staff will review these district plans, and will assist each school district as they go through a program-wide self-assessment and validation system to determine the extent to which the components are in place, and create a district-wide program improvement plan. They will also agree to participate in a third party evaluation of both quality and child outcomes, in addition to use of the New Jersey Kindergarten Entry Assessment, Teaching Strategies GOLD® (TS GOLD®). Many of the quality improvement efforts that will be necessary to expand the High-Quality State Preschool Program (e.g. professional development in curricula, standards and child assessment, structured observation instruments, and supports for children with disabilities) are already being covered by the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, allowing us to dedicate the Preschool Expansion Grant funds to monitoring and evaluation. For details, see the Plan for Ensuring Program Quality below.

**C. Plan for Ensuring Quality in Preschool Programs**

**Goal:**

New Jersey’s goal is to expand the implementation of the components of the High-Quality State Preschool Program to the 19 school districts participating in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan using a continuous evaluation and improvement cycle that defines the program and learning standards, provides support for implementation, evaluates implementation, and adjusts based on the results, with measurable benefits for children at school entry. School districts will oversee implementation in school-based, private provider and Head Start settings.

**Outcome goals by the end of the grant**

1. All 19 programs will be implementing the program and learning standards by the end of the four years, will be equipped to use comprehensive assessment systems, kindergarten entry assessments, and will also support children with disabilities and English language learners.
2. 60% of preschool children with disabilities in the school districts will be served in inclusive, general education settings.
3. Classroom level quality will reach a 5.0 or higher on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised.
4. 100% of teachers in all settings, including Head Start and private provider settings will have their preschool to third grade certificates.
5. At kindergarten entry, all teachers will be using TS GOLD®.

<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
<i>Monitoring and Oversight</i>		
Hire Early Childhood (EC) Specialists to oversee implementation	1/2015 to 3/2015	DECE Manager
EC Specialists assist school districts as they develop their Four-year Preschool Program plan and budget, including identifying Head Start and private providers	4/2015 to 6/2015	EC Specialists and participating School Districts
EC Specialists help districts plan for inclusion of children with disabilities in general education classrooms, as follows: Year 1: 15% of students will be included Year 2: 30% of students will be included Year 3: 45% of students will be included Year 4: 60% of students will be included	4/2015 to 6/2015	EC Specialists and participating School Districts
EC Specialists assist school districts to meet staffing requirements	4/2015 to 6/2015	EC Specialists and participating School Districts
Host curriculum showcase of curriculum options (school districts choose a curriculum to include in the plan)	6/2015	DECE

Review and approve the Four- year Preschool Program Plan and Budget (including professional development plan) using the Four-year Preschool Program Plan Review Tool	7/2015, and each year in the Fall, with an annual update	EC Specialists and other DECE staff
EC Specialists assist in setting up the program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire key staff (preschool intervention and referral staff, coaches, family support personnel, nurses, teachers, teacher assistants)</li> <li>• Assist in the development of provider contracts that meet the requirements of the High-Quality program</li> <li>• Begin to recruit and enroll children (districts and providers)</li> <li>• Enroll schools and providers in Grow NJ Kids (GNJK)</li> </ul>	7/2015 to 9/2015	EC Specialists, School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
<i>Establishing baseline and checking progress.</i>		
Conduct baseline needs assessment in each High-Need Community to scan the availability and quality of each setting	4/2015 to 8/2015	Higher Education Institution
Conduct Spring assessments, including ECERS-R, and measures of teacher-child interaction all four years of the grant, including standardized measures of child performance	Fall and Spring Year 1 Spring, years 2, 3, and 4	Higher Education Institution
EC Specialists conduct a SAVS to evaluate program and learning standards implementation, and a district-wide improvement plan is generated to inform 2016-17	5/2016 to 8/2016, and on an annual basis	EC Specialists Other DECE staff
<i>Training and professional development</i>		
Teachers enroll in P-3 programs, and receive scholarships for participation	Begin 8/2015 ongoing	DHS, Professional Impact NJ, Colleges
Participating schools and providers receive professional development from the Training Academy based on their PD plan (district level) that was included in the Four-year Preschool Program Plan submission and GNJK self assessment (site level), with the following topics: Learning standards, Structured Observation Instruments (ECERS-R and CLASS), Phase 1 of Curriculum implementation, Screening (including health screening), Inclusion of children with disabilities, Supports for English language learners, and Family connections through CCYCs and Central Intake hubs	9/2015 to 8/2016	Training Academy
Participating schools and providers receive year 2 professional development from the Training Academy	9/2016 to 8/2017	Training Academy

based on their SAVS and GNJK self-assessment (site level), and external evaluation with the following topics likely: Performance-based assessment, Phase 2 Curriculum PD, Curriculum fidelity, Pyramid model, Family engagement strategies (including SF Protective Factors Framework), and Using data to inform instruction and improvements		
Participating schools and providers receive year 3 professional development from the Training Academy based on aggregated SAVS, GNJK and external evaluation with the following topics likely: Phase 3 Curriculum PD, Fine tuning math and science practices, Reflective cycle, and Refresher training	9/2017 to 8/2018	DECE staff Training Academy
Participating schools and providers receive year 4 professional development from the Training Academy based on aggregated SAVS, GNJK and external evaluation with the following topics likely: Teacher-child interaction, and Implementing dual language classrooms	9/2018 to 8/2019	DECE staff Training Academy
<i>Implement Kindergarten Entry Assessment</i>		
First half (10) of the expansion school districts enroll in the NJKEA and the Kindergarten Seminar	9/2016 to 8/2017	Teaching Strategies DECE staff
Second half (9) of the expansion districts enroll in the NJKEA and the Kindergarten Seminar	9/2017 to 8/2018	Teaching Strategies DECE staff
Examine NJKEA scores in relation to site level quality	11/2017 11/2018	DECE staff School Districts

***(1) Use no more than five percent of the funds received over the grant period for State Preschool Program infrastructure and quality improvements at the State level through activities such as—***

The State will use no more than 5% of grant funds received over the course of the grant period for infrastructure and quality improvements at the State level. Using Preschool Expansion Grant funding, the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan includes the activities described in the sections below.

(a) Enhancing or expanding Early Learning and Development Standards;

With funding from the RTT-ELC grant, work on the standards is already underway. The NJ Birth to Three Early Learning Standards (Attachment 1 on Appendix page 4), the Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards (Attachment 2 on Appendix page 71), and the NJ Core

Curriculum Content Standards and Common Core Standards (Attachment 10 on Appendix page 362) are being aligned from birth through age 8 (third grade). Once the alignment is complete, modules will be developed, and the aligned document will be disseminated through our statewide Training Academy (see sub-criterion (f) for a description). Preschool Expansion Grant funding will not be used on this initiative.

(b) Implementing Program Standards consistent with a High-Quality Preschool Program;

Approximately \$1,160,775 of the infrastructure and quality improvement funds will be used over the 4 years of the grant to hire 3 Early Childhood Program Specialists (EC Specialists) in the DECE to oversee the quality improvement process. They will support school districts as they develop their Memoranda of Understanding, their Four-year Preschool Program Plans and budgets (see Four-year Preschool Program Plan, Attachment 26, Appendix page 603), and will provide intensive, onsite technical assistance to school districts, private providers and Head Start programs, as they recruit children and implement the High-Quality State Preschool Program components. The EC specialists will review program plans and budgets (using the Four-year Preschool Program Plan Review Tool, Attachment 27 on Appendix page 636), track the implementation of the district's professional development plan, help school districts set up contracts with private providers and Head Start programs, conduct the SAVS and provide onsite technical assistance. They will also assist school districts, private providers and Head Start programs as they use GNJK (NJ's TQRIS). See Plan for Ensuring Program Quality, above.

(c) Supporting programs in meeting the needs of children with disabilities and English learners, including in workforce development;

As part of the program planning process, school districts will submit a professional development plan that describes how they will assist participating school districts, private providers and Head Start programs in accommodating the needs of English language learners and children with disabilities who are being included in general education classrooms. Best practices are described in our High-Quality State Preschool Program Administrative Code (N.J.A.C., 6A:13A, Elements of High Quality Preschool Programs, Attachment 6 on Appendix page 272), the Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines (Attachment 5 on Appendix page 221) and can also be found in the GNJK tool (Attachment 4 on Appendix page 185).

### Supports for Children with Disabilities

In the High-Quality State Preschool Program, 64% of preschool children with special needs are served alongside typically developing peers in general education settings. Most classrooms in the program contain one to two children with special needs. IEP goals are addressed in the context of daily activities and interactions. Like the High-Quality State Preschool Program, expansion school districts (and their private provider and Head Start partners) will also serve children with special needs in general education classrooms. The Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) will be used to improve children's learning environments, and districts will designate an inclusion coach that will support best practices in the classrooms, including those that support children with disabilities in the mixed-delivery system. Pyramid Model (Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)) training and coaching on social emotional development will be provided through the Training Academy via a cadre of master trainers to enhance school districts' success in making accommodations for children with persistent challenging behaviors. All four currently used curricula (Creative Curriculum, HighScope, Tools of the Mind, and Curiosity Corner) have accommodations for preschool children with disabilities (see Attachment 28, on Appendix page 641).

### Supports for English language learners

The State's wide-ranging racial, ethnic and cultural diversity ranks it as the nation's seventh most diverse state (*Study New Jersey*, U.S. Commercial Service, 2013). According to the U.S. Census, 29.2% of New Jersey residents speak a language other than English at home. Nationwide, the percentage is 20.3% (U.S. Census Bureau, State and County QuickFacts, 2013).

Best practices for English language learners are clearly laid out in the State's Code, Guidelines and the SAVS, and dictate that English language learners be provided with daily activities and experiences that promote oral language development and phonemic awareness in both their home language (to the maximum extent possible) and English. Support for children's home language in the preschool years impacts the child's basic language foundation and their ability to understand and grasp content knowledge. Providing preschool English language learners with experiences that focus on oral language development in their home language helps to develop a strong foundation as they transfer learning in English (August, Calderon & Carlo,

2002); and research has shown that early literacy skills transfer from one language to another (August, Carlo, Dressler & Snow, 2005).

Like the school districts in the High-Quality State Preschool Program, the 19 expansion school districts (and their private provider and Head Start partners) will be asked to use dual language programs whenever possible, where both English and non English speakers are immersed in the predominant languages of the group, and where children are exposed to routines, interactions and activities in both languages, as recommended in guidance and Code. When dual language programs are not possible, at a minimum, N.J.A.C., 6A:13A-5.1 requires that teachers provide “*Systematic support for language acquisition for all children, including approaches for helping English language learners acquire English while maintaining their home language within their regularly assigned preschool classroom.*” All four curricula used by the High-Quality State Preschool Program have specific recommendations for English language learners (see Attachment 28 on Appendix page 641) and districts will designate an English language learner coach to participate in professional development provided by the Training Academy. See Plan for Ensuring Program Quality above.

- (d) Conducting a needs assessment to determine the current availability of High-Quality Preschool Programs, including private and faith-based providers and Head Start programs;

In the first year of the grant, we will develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a State university to conduct a needs assessment in the 19 expansion school districts that will inform the improvement process in the subsequent years of the grant. In the Spring of 2015, the State university will inventory school district, Head Start, and private provider programs. For each community, they will provide a report describing the numbers and quality of the different providers, and will discuss each community’s capacity, quality of facilities, staff qualifications, professional development needs, and parent needs (through staff and parent surveys). They will administer structured observation tools to get a baseline measure of classroom quality, prior to professional development and other program improvements, and will conduct an evaluation each year of the grant. Costs were budgeted based on our experiences conducting a prior needs assessment in addition to the biannual quality evaluation conducted on the High-Quality State Preschool Program. In Year 1, we estimate that the cost of the needs assessment and the

evaluation together will be approximately \$450,000. See the Budget Narrative in Section G on page 126 for details on the costs of the annual evaluation in years 2-4.

- (e) Establishing or upgrading preschool teacher education and licensure requirements;

New Jersey has a longstanding commitment to developing a skilled early childhood workforce. One hundred percent of the teachers in the High-Quality State Preschool Program now possess a preschool to third grade certificate (P-3 certificate) or appropriate equivalent. Teachers in community-based provider and Head Start settings receive compensation that is comparable to school district teachers with similar credentials and experience. They also receive medical and other health benefits. These requirements are clearly spelled out in N.J.A.C. 6A:13A, 10(b) as follows:

*The district board of education shall ensure that compensation for certified teachers and teacher assistants in contracting private provider or local Head Start settings is comparable to that of a teacher or teacher assistant employed by the district board of education and based on equivalent certification and credentials.*

*The district board of education shall ensure that the certified teachers and teacher assistants in contracting private providers and local Head Start agencies receiving the comparable compensation meet comparable work schedule requirements for both student contact time and teacher contract time, including the equivalent number of hours per day and the equivalent number of days per contract year established by the district board of education for its certified teachers and teacher assistants. The work schedule shall also include the same amount of preparation time and lunch time as the district board of education certified teachers and teacher assistants.*

Like the teachers in New Jersey's High-Quality Preschool Program, teachers in programs participating in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan will be required to possess at least a bachelor's degree, and a P-3 certificate or equivalent. While teachers in the participating school districts generally have their P-3 certification or an equivalent certification, provider teachers will need to enroll in programs and get their certification. Based on the expected configuration of a mixed-delivery system of Head Start, private providers and school-based programs, we anticipate that 42 teachers will need their P-3 certificate. These teachers will enroll in one of the 18 colleges and universities that offer the certificate. Scholarship funding will be made available through the Preschool Expansion Grant totaling \$504,000. Teacher assistants will also be eligible for scholarships to attain an associate degree in early childhood education or a Child Development Associate, which will be covered by a scholarship fund supported by the RTT-ELC

grant. Teachers will be given 4 years to become certified and all scholarships will be distributed and monitored through a system currently operating within the Department of Human Services' workforce database, Registry One. Funding for certification will be sent directly to participating colleges. See the Plan for Ensuring Quality above, and the Budget Narrative in Section G on page 126 for more details.

(f) Improving teacher and administrator early education training programs and professional development;

With funding from the RTT-ELC grant, New Jersey plans to 1) develop an Early Learning Training Academy with three regional locations to become "hubs" of quality professional development through comprehensive training; 2) develop a coordinated technical assistance (TA) infrastructure across the State's early learning settings; and 3) expand and intensify the existing TA model that serves High-Need programs to build coaching/mentoring capacity. In addition to receiving support from the DECE Early Childhood Program Specialists, the 19 participating school districts (and contracted community providers and Head Start) will benefit from the training provided by the Training Academy.

The Training Academy will be convenient to all parts of the State with three regional locations (North, Central, and South) and will provide targeted training opportunities that reflect the components of GNJK. Through a competitive application process among colleges and universities, the Center for Effective School Practices at Rutgers University, was chosen as the Academy "lead" and will house the Training Academy Leader. The Academy will be partnering with community colleges in northern and southern locations in New Jersey. Through a Training of Trainers (TOT) model (and eventually direct training), the Academy will build the content expertise of the early learning workforce.

From September 2015 until June 2016, the Training Academy will identify a cadre of certified/endorsed trainers by working with three staff members from each regional location to complete training programs in Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), Creative Curriculum, HighScope, Strengthening Families, Pyramid Model, Environmental Rating Scales, New Jersey Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement, Ages & Stages Questionnaire, Early Screening Inventory-Revised, and the Program Administrator's Scale. Also, Academy trainers will be equipped to train in the NJ Birth to Three Early Learning Standards, the

Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards, the aligned standards (when available), inclusion of children with special needs, supporting English language learners, coaching and mentoring strategies, and the reflective cycle.

Once the Academy has its cadre of certified trainers, it will begin to build the capacity of in-state trainers by focusing on targeted professional development training for the Quality Improvement (QI) Specialists that are already part of our professional development and technical assistance structure. The QI Specialists, which include 21 CCR&R staff, 35 State Preschool Program coaches, 15 Head Start Education coordinators, 4.5 DECE staff and 3 Learning Resource Center Preschool Consultants, will work directly with participating GNJK sites. Each participating school district will designate a coach or supervisor position to act as a QI Specialist. The Academy trainers will equip the QI Specialists with the content expertise and tools they need to assist participating programs in all areas contained in the GNJK standards. The Academy will train QI Specialists on concepts and strategies that may include Professional Learning Communities, coaching, consultation, mentoring or intervention according to the specific needs and desired outcomes of each target program as outlined in their improvement plans. In accordance with a program's training needs, the QI Specialists will provide district, provider and Head Start staff with necessary and relevant professional development.

Once established, the Academy will also provide direct trainings to the early care and education community at large. It will provide basic trainings for local directors, teachers, health coordinators, Early Intervention practitioners, home visitors, family child care providers and family workers. The Academy's connection with higher education and using endorsed/certified trainers will build New Jersey's capacity to meet the needs of our early childhood workforce over the long-term. New Jersey's Workforce Registry will track all professional development and embedded supports provided by the Training Academy, as well as all scholarship funding provided through the grant.

(g) Implementing a Statewide Longitudinal Data System to link preschool and elementary and secondary school data;

Children in the High-Quality State Preschool Program, and other NJDOE-funded preschool programs, are already part of New Jersey's Statewide Longitudinal Data System, NJ SMART. As they enter as preschoolers, children are assigned a unique Student Identification Number, allowing the system to follow each child from grade level to grade level. This has

enabled us to examine the efficacy of our program in relation to children's performance on a battery of assessments as well as State tests, the results of which are described in the Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study, Fifth Grade Follow-Up (Barnett et. al, March 2013, Attachment 3, Appendix page 182). Participating School districts, private providers and Head Start programs receive their own site-level codes, which will ultimately allow us to develop a monitoring system connecting child outcome to early experiences at specific district, provider and Head Start sites. While this will not require the use of our infrastructure and quality improvement funds, our RTT-ELC grant funding will support an early childhood integrated data system to link NJ SMART with early care and education data systems in other State agencies. Once completed, our early childhood integrated data system will allow us to assess the efficacy of our programs throughout the birth to eight continuum.

(h) Implementing a Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment System;

New Jersey has developed a robust Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment System that is built into Grow New Jersey Kids (GNJK), our TQRIS, in addition to Administrative Code (N.J.A.C., 6A:13A, Attachment 6 on Appendix page 272) and Guidance (Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines, Attachment 5 on Appendix page 221). Implementation of the four types of assessment (screening, performance assessment, environmental measures, and measures of teacher-child interaction) is measured by GNJK (for all Early Learning Providers) and the SAVS (Attachment 7 on Appendix page 274). School districts, private providers and Head Start programs are required to use valid and reliable developmental screenings (Ages & Stages Questionnaire, Early Screening Inventory-Revised; formative assessments that correspond with the comprehensive curricula and learning standards (TS GOLD®, The Child Observation Record (COR) or Work Sampling System); and measures of environment (Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scales-Revised/ITERS-R and Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised/ECERS-R) and adult-child interaction (Classroom Assessment Scoring System/CLASS). A combination of Training Academy staff (see sub-criterion (f)), Early Childhood Program Specialists in the DECE, and instrument publishers will provide training in these instruments.

Additionally, the High-Quality State Preschool Program and GNJK require the use of the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT). Other instruments specific to inclusion, English

language learner supports, and optimizing settings to reduce challenging behavior also are used. This training, along with much of the training described above, is already provided through the RTT-ELC grant.

(i) Building preschool programs' capacity to engage parents in decisions about their children's education and development, help families build protective factors, and help parents support their children's learning at home;

The foundation of family engagement in New Jersey is the Strengthening Families (SF) Protective Factors Framework. New Jersey's Department of Children and Families (DCF) was an early adopter of Strengthening Families, and in 2006 led a statewide expansion of core training for community partners. DCF grantees and many other New Jersey community partners (including Early Learning Providers) have been trained in the Strengthening Families research-informed principles. As part of the RTT-ELC grant and the rollout of GNJK, Training Academy staff will provide training in the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework and checklist. To empower New Jersey's High-Need families to be leaders and partners in their children's early learning and development, by 2018, New Jersey will have trained at least 2,800 early childhood educators, community partners, and GNJK participants in the five Strengthening Families Protective Factors. We also plan to use an evidence-based progression of statewide family engagement standards to put all 1,790 programs in GNJK on a path toward improved, two-way communication with New Jersey's diverse families.

Also through our RTT-ELC grant, we are establishing a statewide network of County Councils for Young Children (CCYCs) in all 21 counties, with 51 percent parent membership. The CCYC's will help to refine key aspects of GNJK by creating a process for family feedback. Each CCYC will work within the community to support families as children transition to preschool and kindergarten; facilitate strong social networks with linkages to community supports; and provide authentic opportunities for family involvement in decision making and leadership development that supports children, families and communities.

Finally, we are in the process of using RTT-ELC grant funds to develop standards documents and a library of video excerpts designed to reach culturally and linguistically diverse families. These resources will be made available to families through the development of a family website connected to GNJK outcomes.

(j) Building State- and community-level support for High-Quality Preschool Programs through systemic linkages to other early learning programs and resources to support families, such as child health, mental health, family support, nutrition, child welfare, and adult education and training sectors; and

Over the past five years, the State has established a coordinated network of prenatal/early childhood services known as Central Intake hubs to function as a single point of entry at the county level for pregnant/parenting families. These hubs (currently in 15 counties) will be expanded to all 21 with RTT-ELC funding. Central Intake helps to streamline access to health care resources, social services, and other family and community supports. In addition, families will connect to high-quality early learning and development programs through the Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies, and the local CCYC. Early Learning Providers across settings will connect their families with Central Intake hubs and encourage them to participate on the CCYCs for their counties. No additional funds will be necessary, as these activities are covered by the RTT-ELC grant. See the Plan for Ensuring Quality above.

(k) Other activities that would support the delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs to Eligible Children.

School districts participating in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan will be paired with mentors from a High-Quality State Preschool Program in their county, helping them to problem solve, answer questions, and resolve issues. Visits to High-Quality State Preschool Program sites will be facilitated by the DECE Specialists with classroom walkthroughs focused on the implementation of curricula (using the appropriate fidelity checklists) and assessments. In the initial years of New Jersey's High-Quality Preschool Program, administrators came together monthly with DECE staff to listen to and learn from each other. Participating expansion districts will also meet regularly to establish a similar learning community.

***(2) Implement a system for monitoring and supporting continuous improvement for each Subgrantee to ensure that each Subgrantee is providing High-Quality Preschool Programs (which may be accomplished through the use of leveraging a TQRIS and other existing monitoring systems), including the extent to which the State --***

- (a) Has the capacity to measure preschool quality, including parent satisfaction measures, and provide performance feedback to inform and drive State and local continuous program improvement efforts;

Participating programs will be included in the continuous program evaluation and improvement cycle used by the High-Quality State Preschool Program. Like the other school districts, the 19 districts in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan will participate in the Self-Assessment and Validation System (SAVS) that evaluates the implementation of each program component. School districts conduct their SAVS by checking off the indicator for each criterion and category. They assign ratings using the following rubric:

<b>Not Yet [1]</b>	<b>In Progress [2]</b>	<b>Fully Met [3]</b>
<p>This criterion is not met.</p> <p>There is little evidence that this statement accurately describes the program but plans may have been developed.</p>	<p>The criterion is partially met.</p> <p>There is some evidence that this statement accurately describes the program. Plans have been developed and initiated but full realization is not yet accomplished.</p>	<p>The criterion is completely met.</p> <p>There is a great deal of evidence that this statement accurately describes the program.</p> <p>For a criterion to rate a [3], all indicators related to the criterion must be present. (It also is possible for all indicators to be present without rating the criterion a [3]).</p>

Individual Early Learning Providers will be part of GNJK. Both the SAVS and GNJK include measures of parent satisfaction (see Attachments 7 and 4 on Appendix pages 274 and 185). See Attachment 50 for a sample Parent Survey on Appendix page 797. These tools measure performance in the following areas:

<b>Table (C)(2)(a) Tools to Drive Continuous Quality Improvement</b>	
<b>Self Assessment and Validation System</b>	<b>Grow NJ Kids</b>
<p><b>Section I: Program Planning and Administration (Appendix page 278)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administration</li> <li>• Recruitment and Outreach</li> <li>• Facilities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Category 1: Safe, Healthy Learning Environments (Appendix page 188)</b></p>
<p><b>Section II: Curriculum and Classroom Practices (Appendix page 287)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum and Program</li> <li>• Supporting English Language Learners</li> <li>• Intervention and Support</li> <li>• Inclusion</li> </ul>	<p><b>Category 2: Curriculum and Learning Environment (Appendix page 193)</b></p>
<p><b>Section III: Professional Development (Appendix page 298)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional Development</li> <li>• Staff Qualifications</li> </ul>	<p><b>Category 3: Family and Community Engagement (Appendix page 201)</b></p>

<p><b>Section IV: Program and Child Evaluation (Appendix page 307)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Assessment and Screening</li> <li>• Program Evaluation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Category 4: Workforce/Professional Development (Appendix page 206)</b></p>
<p><b>Section V: Community Collaboration (Appendix page 311)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Collaboration</li> <li>• Family Involvement</li> </ul> <p>Information about the child and feedback about the program is solicited from the family at school entry and throughout the year. (See sample parent survey, Attachment 50, Appendix page 797)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head Start Collaboration</li> </ul>	<p><b>Category 5: Administration and Management (Appendix page 215)</b></p> <p>Annually, input is solicited from staff and families to evaluate the program. Results are used to develop/inform a comprehensive written program improvement plan. (Parent Feedback)</p>
<p><b>Section VI: Support Services (Appendix page 319)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health, Safety and Food Services</li> </ul>	<p>Level 1- License or approved plan  Level 2- Self evaluation  Levels 3-5- external raters, and a minimum score on the ECERS-R and ITERS-R and at levels 4 and 5, CLASS</p>
<p><b>Section VII: P-3 Program Articulation (Appendix page 322)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition Practices</li> </ul>	

In addition, the school districts will be included in annual third party evaluations of classroom quality, using the ECERS-R, SELA, PRISM and CLASS. Approximately \$1,175,000 in Infrastructure/Quality Improvement funds (over the four years) will be used together with state funding to include the 19 participating districts along with the High-Quality State Preschool Program districts in the third party evaluation. This funding will be used to cover the evaluations, analysis and reports. See the Plan for Ensuring Quality above and the Budget Narrative in Section G on page 126 for details.

(b) Is using a Statewide Longitudinal Data System that is able to track student progress from preschool through third grade; and

State-funded preschool children are already included in NJ SMART (as described in sub-criterion (g)), allowing us to track the impact of our programs. We also will include the results of our Kindergarten Entry Assessment (TS GOLD®). Upon completion of an assessment period and the assignment of scores, the vendor will upload the scores into NJ SMART. We will be able to link the kindergarten readiness data to prior early experiences in early learning and development settings, where possible, and to later performance on New Jersey state tests, starting with the third grade PARCC assessments. NJ-EASEL (New Jersey Enterprise Analysis System

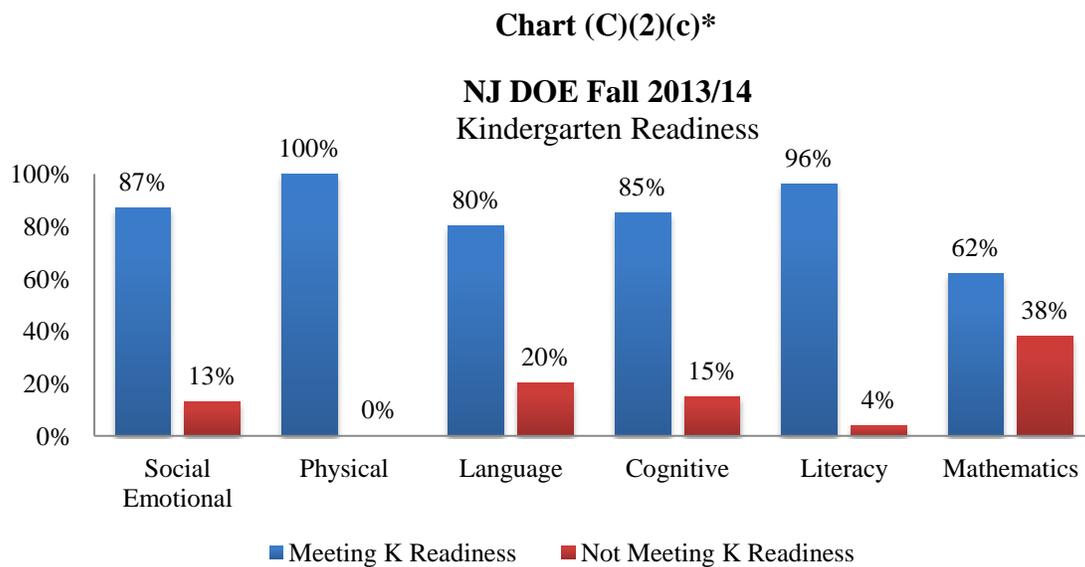
for Early Learning), our early childhood integrated data system, when ready, will allow us to match data from our early childhood data systems to assess our programs’ efficacy. We will be able to link the valuable Kindergarten Entry Assessment data with early learning and development programs across sectors (e.g., Licensing, NJ SMART, Workforce Registry, Home Visiting, child care, State Preschool, Early Head Start and Head Start, Early Intervention), providing concrete feedback on the efficacy of all early education and care programs. The NJ-EASEL technology is being developed by the State Office of Information Technology (OIT). For GNJK, TS GOLD® will provide us with insight into whether the levels of the system are correlated with children’s performance in kindergarten, and will provide valuable information to programs so that they can make adjustments that will improve the chances for children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. See the Plan for Ensuring Quality.

(c) Clearly specifies the measureable outcomes, including school readiness, to be achieved by the program.

TS GOLD® will be used with entering kindergarteners. Teaching Strategies has established Kindergarten readiness points for all six areas of development and learning: Social Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive (Approaches to Learning), Literacy, and Mathematics. The kindergarten readiness point is intended to be used prior to instruction in the Fall for the New Jersey Kindergarten Entry Assessment (NJKEA). The chart below describes the cumulative raw scores for each domain that a child who is “ready” for kindergarten should possess (according to research conducted by Teaching Strategies). These scores will be our targets.

Area	Raw Score for K GOLD Readiness
Social Emotional	47
Physical	30
Language	45
Cognitive	49
Literacy	41
Mathematics	35

Chart (C)(2)(c) shows the percentages of kindergarten children who participated in the NJKEA pilot in the Fall of 2013 and achieved these scores at the KEA checkpoint, which was administered prior to instruction. The majority of kindergarten children at the KEA checkpoint were at the kindergarten readiness point. At the end of the KEA checkpoint this year (October, 31, 2014), Teaching Strategies will provide an updated chart to reflect the most recent data for kindergarteners, at which time we will modify our targets. We will set increasingly higher targets for children who are not meeting the widely held expectations for performance.



*\*Please note that only one school was rated on the Physical domain for development and learning at the Kindergarten Entry Assessment point last year.*

***(3) Measure the outcomes of participating children across the five Essential Domains of School Readiness during the first few months of their admission into kindergarten using an assessment or assessments, such as a Kindergarten Entry Assessment, to achieve the purposes for which the assessment was developed and that conform with the recommendations of the National Research Council report on early childhood assessments.***

Teachers in participating school districts will be asked to use TS GOLD® to gauge children’s skills when they enter kindergarten. The purpose will be twofold: 1) to inform instruction, and 2) to understand the efficacy of preceding programs. Accurate measurement of young children’s competencies is a challenge, due to limited attention and communications skills, and the variable nature of young children’s development. Assessments must be individually administered and cannot rely on quick and easy one-shot assessments, such as “fill

in the bubble” tests. However, the key to a seamless transition from the various early learning environments from which children come into the K-12 public school system is in understanding the developmental stage and level of readiness of children at the intersection point of kindergarten entry. We chose a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (NJKEA) that met two main objectives: 1) *To understand children’s academic and social development at school entry to inform instruction, and 2) To serve as one data point in evaluating preschool program efficacy.* In the 2012-13 school year, New Jersey launched a two-year NJKEA pilot in seven districts across the State—a project that has provided significant information, data and lessons learned and has served as the basis for statewide implementation. We subsequently issued a Request For Proposals (RFP) and chose TS GOLD® for a five-year statewide launch of the NJKEA based on the lessons learned from the pilot as follows (see Plan for Improving Quality, above):

- Year 1: 5% of classrooms (includes 235 teachers and 5,925 children)
- Year 2: 30% of classrooms (includes 1,410 teachers and 35,550 children)
- Year 3: 55% of classrooms (includes 2,585 teachers and 65,175 children)
- Year 4: 80% of classrooms (includes 3,760 teachers and 94,800 children)
- Year 5: 100% of classrooms (includes 4,700 teachers and 118,500 children)

While we are limiting the initial implementation to three domains- Social Emotional, Literacy and Mathematics (based on feedback from the pilot districts)- each cohort will begin with the 3 domains, and phase in the other areas covered by TS GOLD®- with Physical, Language, and Cognitive (Approaches to Learning) next, and Science and Technology, Social Studies, the Arts and English Language Acquisition after teachers are comfortable collecting the six domains. In order to use the NJKEA, teachers will also simultaneously participate in a five-session Kindergarten Seminar (conducted by DECE staff) that provides the foundational knowledge necessary to implement a performance-based assessment and to address all Essential Domains of School Readiness. The content is based on the Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines (Attachment 14, on Appendix page 432) as follows:

- Teacher-child interactions
- Incorporating the Common Core State Standards and weaving in the TS GOLD® assessment cycle
- Kindergarten teaching practices

- Classroom environment and materials

Teaching Strategies conducted 3-day in-person training sessions this past Summer, in 3 regions, reaching 235 teachers and 94 administrators. Training topics included: Observing and Documenting, Scoring Reports, Family Communication, and Reliable Assessments. After the training, teachers completed a reliability assessment, adding credence to the accuracy of teacher ratings before beginning to use the instrument. Teachers have started collecting data, and will complete their collections in the eighth week of school. Throughout the rollout, NJKEA teacher training will be supported by the training of district administrators as well as Professional Learning Communities that help to embed principles of assessment in every day practice. We are also developing a set of guidelines and checklists to guide the interpretation of the portfolio collections, which will help ensure that teachers are collecting and rating information accurately and reliably. Once the teachers assign the scores, Teaching Strategies will upload them into NJ SMART. Funding for the NJKEA is provided by the State's assessment budget, and will not require any funding from the Preschool Expansion Grant.

Evidence for selection criterion (C):

- (C)(2)(a) Evidence of a monitoring protocol used to drive continuous program improvement.
- (C)(2)(c) Evidence of State targets with measurable outcomes, including school readiness achieved by the program.
- Any other supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers.

**Selection Criterion D. Expanding High-Quality Preschool Programs in Each High-Need Community.**

The extent to which the State articulates an ambitious and achievable plan for expanding High-Quality Preschool Programs in two or more High-Need Communities, including a description of how—

New Jersey will expand High-Quality Preschool Programs to 19 High-Need Communities during the course of the grant period using a mixed-delivery system that improves existing slots, and creates new slots in school district settings, and by contracting with Head Start and private providers. The New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan leverages existing State funding provided to High-Need Communities to both enhance existing preschool slots, and add new slots too. Combining existing funding with grant funding will allow New Jersey to serve a higher percentage of Eligible Children in High-Quality Programs that are economically diverse. For details, see the Plan for Expanding High-Quality Preschool Programs in High-Need Communities below.

<b>D. Plan for Expanding High-Quality Preschool Programs in Each High-Need Community</b>		
<b>Goal:</b> New Jersey’s goal is to aggressively expand the number of Eligible Children served by Subgrantees in High-Need Communities while also improving existing slots already offered to both Eligible Children and other preschool-aged children in the community.		
<b>Outcome goals by the end of the grant</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage in MOU’s with 19 school district Subgrantees with underserved Eligible Children to both increase available High-Quality slots and improve existing slots.</li> <li>2. Subgrant 95% of grant funding (\$66.5 million over 4 years) to 19 school districts to serve Eligible Children in district, private provider, and Head Start settings.</li> <li>3. Serve an additional 1,248 Eligible Children in High-Quality Preschool Programs with Preschool Expansion Grant funding.</li> <li>4. Improve existing slots for 729 Eligible Children and 338 other children in High-Quality Preschool Programs by limiting class sizes, decreasing child to staff ratios, extending the program day, providing Comprehensive Services, and employing/compensating teachers with bachelor’s degrees and preschool certification.</li> <li>5. Implement a sustainability plan to maintain and expand the new and improved slots created throughout the grant period.</li> </ol>		
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
Host meeting with Subgrantees to discuss development of MOUs, program plans and budgets	1/2015	DECE Director

Develop formal MOUs, program plans and budgets with each Subgrantee	1/2015 to 3/2015	Subgrantees and DECE Director
Hire Early Childhood (EC) Specialists to oversee implementation (2 Specialists and 1 Specialist Lead) (See Section (C)(1)(b) on page 42)	1/2015 to 3/2015	DECE Manager
Develop and execute MOU with higher education institution to conduct baseline needs assessment in each Subgrantee's High-Need Community to examine the availability and quality of each setting (See also Section (C)(1)(d) on page 44)	3/2015 to 8/2015	DECE Director and EC Specialist Lead, Higher Education Institution
Use results of needs assessment to assist Subgrantees in the development of Four-year Preschool Program Plan and Budget, including methods for identifying Head Start and private provider partners in current and future grant years	4/2015 to 6/2015	EC Specialists and participating Subgrantees/School Districts
Use results of needs assessment to identify minor remodeling needed to ensure safe and appropriate environments for Eligible Children in district, private provider and Head Start settings	6/2015 to 9/2015	EC Specialists and participating Subgrantees/School Districts
Review and approve the Four-year Preschool Program Plan and Budget, including district plan for working with private providers and Head Start, and district plan for identifying Eligible Children (See also Section (C)(1)(b) on page 42)	7/2015 to 8/2015, and each year, with an annual update	EC Specialists and other DECE staff
EC Specialists assist in setting up the program including (See also Section (E)(1) on page 82): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire key staff (preschool intervention and referral staff, coaches, family support personnel, nurses, teachers, teacher assistants)</li> <li>• Assist in the development of provider contracts that meet the requirements of the High-Quality Program</li> <li>• Begin to recruit and enroll children (districts and providers)</li> <li>• Enroll schools and providers in Grow NJ Kids</li> </ul>	7/2015 to 9/2015	EC Specialists, School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
EC Specialists conduct a SAVS to evaluate program and learning standards implementation, and a district-wide improvement plan is generated to inform 2016-17 (See Section also (E)(4) on page 87)	5/2015 to 8/2015, and on an annual basis	EC Specialists Other DECE staff
Teachers enroll in P-3 programs, and receive scholarships for participation (See Section also (C)(1)(e) on page 45)	Begin 8/2015 ongoing	DHS, Professional Impact NJ, State

		Colleges and Universities
Serve 437 Eligible Children in improved High-Quality Preschool Program slots along with 203 other children, and 749 Eligible Children in new High-Quality Preschool Program slots.	9/2015	School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
Serve 547 Eligible Children in improved High-Quality Preschool Program slots along with 254 other children, and 936 Eligible Children in new High-Quality Preschool Program slots.	9/2016	School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
Serve 620 Eligible Children in improved High-Quality Preschool Program slots along with 287 other children, and 1,061 Eligible Children in new High-Quality Preschool Program slots.	9/2017	School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
Serve 729 Eligible Children in improved High-Quality Preschool Program slots along with 338 other children, and 1,248 Eligible Children in new High-Quality Preschool Program slots.	9/2018	School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start

***(1) The State has selected each Subgrantee and each High-Need Community that will be served, including a description of each High-Need Community and its geographic diversity, such as whether the community is located in a rural or tribal area, and whether it is located in a federally designated Promise Zone.***

New Jersey has a strong history of establishing and sustaining High-Quality Preschool Programs within High-Need Communities. Thirty-five of the State’s school districts are currently fully-funded to provide a High-Quality Preschool Program to all of their resident three- and four-year-old children. While these school districts have long been identified as the communities with the highest need in the State, there is no doubt that many other New Jersey school districts are also High-Need Communities, and could greatly benefit from additional funding for preschool education. It is these other school districts that we have identified within the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan as High-Need Communities, and these school districts will be our primary Subgrantees, serving Eligible Children in a combination of district, community provider, and Head Start settings. We selected each school district based on several factors, including aspects of high need already noted within the State’s school funding formula (see (D)(3) below for details).

In addition to high-risk factors identified within New Jersey’s school funding formula, many of the school districts included in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan exhibit other

indicators of high need. For example, 12 of our 19 participating Subgrantees (63.2%) report that less than half of their third grade children read at or above proficiency. The 4 remaining Subgrantees report that between 51% and 68% of third graders read at or above proficiency. All of the 19 Subgrantees are Title I eligible school districts, and 10 have school wide Title I programs at the elementary school level. Finally, 17 of the 19 districts are rated as communities with a large number of at-risk children as identified by a Home Visiting Needs Assessment conducted by New Jersey's Department of Children and Families. The Home Visiting Needs Assessment considered such factors as rates of child abuse, domestic offenses, crime, high school drop outs, infant mortality, binge drinking, and preterm births.

The vast majority of the 35 school districts currently participating in New Jersey's High-Quality Preschool Program are located within the State's northern and central counties (60%). Not surprisingly, we found that communities included in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan are more heavily weighted towards the southern counties of the State. Fourteen Subgrantees are located within the southern counties of the State (Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, and Gloucester); 4 Subgrantees are located within the northern counties of the State (Passaic, Union, Hudson and Somerset); and 1 Subgrantee is located within a central county (Monmouth).

The communities vary widely in size, from populations of just 4,243 in Egg Harbor City, to 92,843 in Lakewood. Below is additional information about each High-Need Community participating as a Subgrantee in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan. The sources for the information which follows are the U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey; the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (2013 unemployment rate); and the New Jersey Department of Education (free/reduced lunch, and reading proficiency).

#### **ABSECON CITY, ATLANTIC COUNTY**

Total Population: 8,411

Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 3.5%

Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 0.0%

Individuals below poverty: 7.6%

Adults without High School Degree: 10.8%

Population speaking language other than English at home: 15.6%  
2013 Unemployment Rate: 12.3%  
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 45%  
Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 54%

**ATLANTIC CITY, ATLANTIC COUNTY**

Total Population: 39,558  
Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 34.7%  
Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 39.7%  
Individuals below poverty: 29.9%  
Adults without High School Degree: 31.5%  
Population speaking language other than English at home: 41.8%  
2013 Unemployment Rate: 16.5%  
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 93%  
Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 53%

**EGG HARBOR CITY, ATLANTIC COUNTY**

Total Population: 4,243  
Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 16.0%  
Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 27.8%  
Individuals below poverty: 19.9%  
Adults without High School Degree: 20.8%  
Population speaking language other than English at home: 27.9%  
2013 Unemployment Rate: 18.4%  
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 80%  
Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 56%

**GALLOWAY TWP, ATLANTIC COUNTY**

Total Population: 37,349  
Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 8.5%  
Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 17.8%  
Individuals below poverty: 6.9%

Adults without High School Degree: 10.9%  
Population speaking language other than English at home: 20.0%  
2013 Unemployment Rate: 10.8%  
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 53%  
Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 55%

**HAMILTON TWP, ATLANTIC COUNTY**

Total Population: 26,503  
Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 12.7%  
Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 31.8%  
Individuals below poverty: 9.9%  
Adults without High School Degree: 13.1%  
Population speaking language other than English at home: 24.7%  
2013 Unemployment Rate: 11.5%  
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 53%  
Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 35%

**MOUNT HOLLY TWP, BURLINGTON COUNTY**

Total Population: 9,536  
Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 11.7%  
Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 5.0%  
Individuals below poverty: 12.7%  
Adults without High School Degree: 12.2%  
Population speaking language other than English at home: 10.0%  
2013 Unemployment Rate: 10.8%  
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 61%  
Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 40%

**BELLMAWR BORO, CAMDEN COUNTY**

Total Population: 11,583  
Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 11.0%  
Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 9.1%

Individuals below poverty: 10.7%  
Adults without High School Degree: 16.7%  
Population speaking language other than English at home: 16.9%  
2013 Unemployment Rate: 9.0%  
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 51%  
Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 47%

**LINDENWOLD BORO, CAMDEN COUNTY**

Total Population: 17,613  
Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 18.4%  
Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 22.2%  
Individuals below poverty: 15.0%  
Adults without High School Degree: 17.6%  
Population speaking language other than English at home: 24.2%  
2013 Unemployment Rate: 10.9%  
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 75%  
Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 53%

**MIDDLE TWP, CAPE MAY COUNTY**

Total Population: 18,911  
Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 12.6%  
Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 8.2%  
Individuals below poverty: 9.5%  
Adults without High School Degree: 15.1%  
Population speaking language other than English at home: 10.8%  
2013 Unemployment Rate: 12.3%  
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 41%  
Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 49%

**UPPER DEERFIELD TWP, CUMBERLAND COUNTY**

Total Population: 7,660  
Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 9.4%

Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 16.7%

Individuals below poverty: 7.8%

Adults without High School Degree: 15.3%

Population speaking language other than English at home: 12.9%

2013 Unemployment Rate: 7.4%

Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 56%

Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 64%

### **CLAYTON BORO, GLOUCESTER COUNTY**

Total Population: 8,179

Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 9.8%

Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 26.4%

Individuals below poverty: 9.2%

Adults without High School Degree: 13.0%

Population speaking language other than English at home: 8.9%

2013 Unemployment Rate: 6.9%

Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 55%

Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 59%

### **PAULSBORO BORO, GLOUCESTER COUNTY**

Total Population: 6,097

Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 25.9%

Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 43.5%

Individuals below poverty: 29.2%

Adults without High School Degree: 12.9%

Population speaking language other than English at home: 8.8%

2013 Unemployment Rate: 15.5%

Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 76%

Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 63%

### **NORTH BERGEN TOWNSHIP, HUDSON COUNTY**

Total Population: 60,773

Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 17.9%  
Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 17.1%  
Individuals below poverty: 11.9%  
Adults without High School Degree: 21.9%  
Population speaking language other than English at home: 79.2%  
2013 Unemployment Rate: 9.7%  
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 63%  
Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 41%

**FREEHOLD BORO, MONMOUTH COUNTY**

Total Population: 12,052  
Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 15.4%  
Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 7.6%  
Individuals below poverty: 14.7%  
Adults without High School Degree: 27.7%  
Population speaking language other than English at home: 45.3%  
2013 Unemployment Rate: 7.0%  
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 77%  
Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 54%

**BERKELEY TWP, OCEAN COUNTY**

Total Population: 41,255  
Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 10.9%  
Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 2.2%  
Individuals below poverty: 6.7%  
Adults without High School Degree: 15.1%  
Population speaking language other than English at home: 10.6%  
2013 Unemployment Rate: 12.9%  
Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 34%  
Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 32%

### **LAKEWOOD TWP, OCEAN COUNTY**

Total Population: 92,843

Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 26.0%

Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 34.1%

Individuals below poverty: 29.5%

Adults without High School Degree: 16.9%

Population speaking language other than English at home: 25.3%

2013 Unemployment Rate: 6.5%

Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 88%

Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 73%

### **CLIFTON CITY, PASSAIC COUNTY**

Total Population: 84,136

Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 10.9%

Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 9.0%

Individuals below poverty: 9.0%

Adults without High School Degree: 12.9%

Population speaking language other than English at home: 53.8%

2013 Unemployment Rate: 8.8%

Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 56%

Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 43%

### **BOUND BROOK BORO, SOMERSET COUNTY**

Total Population: 10,402

Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 10.0%

Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 11.4%

Individuals below poverty: 8.7%

Adults without High School Degree: 30.1%

Population speaking language other than English at home: 53.2%

2013 Unemployment Rate: 8.5%

Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 77%

Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 62%

## **LINDEN CITY, UNION COUNTY**

Total Population: 40,499

Families making \$25,000 or less annually: 11.0%

Families with children under the age of 5, below poverty level in the past 12 months: 10.0%

Individuals below poverty: 8.5%

Adults without High School Degree: 16.5%

Population speaking language other than English at home: 46.9%

2013 Unemployment Rate: 9.3%

Children Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch (185% of poverty level): 55%

Third Graders Not Reading with Proficiency: 53%

***(2) Each High-Need Community is currently underserved, including the number and percentage of four-year-olds in State Preschool Programs and other publically funded preschool programs.***

Subgrantees were specifically chosen to participate in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan based on economic and demographic considerations, but also because they all have a population of underserved four-year-olds (see Table 1 below). In some cases, four-year-olds are underserved because no preschool program is offered at all, and in other cases, because the existing preschool program does not meet all standards of a High-Quality Preschool Program, including a Full-Day program. Of the 19 High-Need Communities participating in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan, 4 school districts receive no State aid for preschool, and will use grant funding to create new High-Quality Preschool slots for Eligible Children in district, private provider and Head Start programs. The other 15 High-Need Communities receive some State aid for publicly funded preschool programs. These Subgrantees will use State funding to increase the quality of current slots, which serve both Eligible Children and other resident preschool-age children. They will use the grant funding to expand the number of High-Quality slots being offered to Eligible Children district, private provider and Head Start programs.

<b>Section (D) Table 1: Underserved 4-Year Olds in Subgrantee School Districts</b>					
<b>County</b>	<b>District Name</b>	<b>Total Estimated 4-Year-Olds*</b>	<b>4-Year Olds Served Half-Day</b>	<b>4-Year Olds Served Full-Day</b>	<b>% of 4-Year-Olds Served</b>
ATLANTIC	ABSECON CITY	85			0.0%
ATLANTIC	ATLANTIC CITY	613		200	32.6%
ATLANTIC	EGG HARBOR CITY	56		34	60.7%
ATLANTIC	GALLOWAY TWP	317		34	10.7%
ATLANTIC	HAMILTON TWP	304	127		41.8%
BURLINGTON	MOUNT HOLLY TWP	78	46		59.0%
CAMDEN	BELLMAWR BORO	118		71	60.2%
CAMDEN	LINDENWOLD BORO	231		80	34.6%
CAPE MAY	MIDDLE TWP	153	136		88.9%
CUMBERLAND	UPPER DEERFIELD TWP	80	68		85.0%
GLOUCESTER	CLAYTON BORO	97	59		60.8%
GLOUCESTER	PAULSBORO BORO	89		47	52.8%
HUDSON	NORTH BERGEN	559	229		41.0%
MONMOUTH	FREEHOLD BORO	191	37		19.4%
OCEAN	BERKELEY TWP	278	6	17	8.3%
OCEAN	LAKEWOOD TWP	511		157	30.7%
PASSAIC	CLIFTON CITY	890			0.0%
SOMERSET	BOUND BROOK BORO	120	67		55.8%
UNION	LINDEN CITY	434		277	63.8%
		<b>5,204</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>917</b>	<b>32.5%</b>

\*In accordance with New Jersey’s school funding formula, a total “universe” of four-year-olds is calculated annually based on first grade enrollment.

Table 1 illustrates the estimated number of four-year-olds in each High-Need Community, as well as the number of children currently served in State-funded preschool programs by length of program day. As stated above, although most of the proposed Subgrantees already receive State funding for preschool programs, none of the programs are currently meeting all of the standards of the State’s High-Quality State Preschool Program. For example, the 2 districts serving the highest percentage of children (Upper Deerfield Twp. and Middle Twp.) are providing only a half-day program. Four districts are able to provide a Full-Day program to more than half of their four-year-olds, but do not meet other standards of High-Quality Programs, such as class size, comprehensive curriculum and assessment, and coaches to support implementation.

The goal of the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan is to increase the percentage of Eligible Children served in Full-Day programs meeting the standards of High-Quality Preschool

Programs. Once fully implemented, the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan will increase the overall percentage of four-year-olds served in these High-Need Communities from 33% to 45%.

It is important to note that districts receiving State funding for preschool are permitted to serve any resident three- and four-year-old child, not just four-year-olds meeting an income eligibility criterion. The State considers all resident preschool-aged children in these areas to be “at-risk” and therefore eligible for the State-funded program. Combining Preschool Expansion Grant funding with current State funding will allow these communities to serve a larger percentage of their population’s Eligible Children as defined by both the grant and the State, while also increasing the quality of the programming being offered to those children. This will also allow Subgrantees to serve Eligible Children in a more economically diverse classroom setting.

***(3) The State conducted outreach, including consultation with tribes, if applicable, to potential Subgrantees and the process used in selecting each Subgrantee.***

There currently are 590 operating school districts within the State of New Jersey. Using free and reduced lunch eligibility as a guide (185% of poverty), we know that low-income children reside in every one of these districts. In order to identify potential Subgrantees, the State used several factors to focus in on the communities most in need of funding for High-Quality Preschool Programs.

New Jersey’s school funding formula, the School Funding Reform Act of 2008 (SFRA) defines communities with the highest need by taking into account both “District Factor Groups” (DFGs) and free and reduced lunch percentages (See Attachment 29 SFRA, on Appendix page 648). DFGs represent an approximate measure of a community’s relative socioeconomic status, and are assigned to school districts based on a variety of factors including:

- 1) % of adults with no high school diploma;
- 2) % of adults with some college education;
- 3) Occupational status;
- 4) Unemployment rate;
- 5) % of individuals in poverty; and
- 6) Median family income (See Attachment 30 DFG, on Appendix page 654).

School districts with DFG's of A and B are considered to be the highest need communities in the State, along with CD districts that have a free and reduced lunch percentage of at least 40%. There are 143 districts that meet this established definition of High-Need Communities in New Jersey, and 35 are already funded to serve all resident three- and four-year-old children in our High-Quality State Preschool Program, leaving a list of 108 districts. In order to focus our outreach to a more reasonable number of districts, we chose to target our initial outreach to the 56 school districts with the largest estimated number of four-year-olds (75 or more children) and assess their interest in participating in this Preschool Expansion Grant.

On September 12, 2014, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) sent a letter reaching out to the superintendents of those 56 districts (see Attachment 31 – District Outreach Letter, on Appendix page 656). In the letter, the NJDOE describes that the Preschool Expansion Grant was designed to increase the availability of High-Quality Preschool Program slots for four-year-old children at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, by conducting activities that improve existing preschool slots, in addition to creating new slots to serve additional children.

The NJDOE's letter also specified that participating school districts will need to use grant funding to meet the following components of New Jersey's current High-Quality State Preschool Program:

- Certified teacher and assistant for each class of 15 children;
- Developmentally appropriate, comprehensive curriculum;
- District/private provider/Head Start collaboration;
- Full-Day (6 hour minimum educational day), 180-day program;
- Coaches for in-class follow up;
- Support for home languages of English language learners (dual language classrooms whenever possible);
- Support for preschool children with potential difficulties and for children with disabilities (pre intervention and referral staff);
- Supports for families (family workers, community parent involvement specialists);
- Fiscal monitoring and supports for contracted private providers and Head Start; and
- Support for healthy children (nurses).

Along with the above components, prospective school districts were made aware that successful implementation of a High-Quality Preschool Program would require their participation in several new and long-standing initiatives/practices including:

- New Jersey's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) Grow NJ Kids, and the professional development associated with the system.
- The New Jersey Kindergarten Entry Assessment.
- A mixed-delivery system of Head Start, private provider and/or school-based classrooms.
- The inclusion of children with disabilities in general education settings and use IDEA funding to support the costs associated with inclusion.
- The completion of a four-year preschool program plan and annual budget describing how the high-quality components and the mixed-delivery system will be implemented, and how funds will be used.
- Implementation of the following:
  - New Jersey Administrative Code, 6A:13A, Elements of High Quality Preschool Programs;
  - New Jersey Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines; and
  - New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards.
- Training on and implementation of the following:
  - New Jersey Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines
  - New Jersey First through Third Grade Guidelines.
- A third party evaluation of both quality and impact on children.

School district superintendents were made aware of the grant application timelines, and asked to contact the NJDOE to indicate their willingness to participate as a Subgrantee no later than September 22, 2014. The NJDOE was contacted by 21 interested school districts, and 19 ultimately decided to participate in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan. Each of the 19 school district Subgrantees has submitted a letter of intent indicating their willingness to participate in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan (see Attachment 32, Letters of Intent from Subgrantees, Appendix pages 658 to 678).

***(4) The State will subgrant at least 95% of its Federal grant award over the grant period to its Subgrantee or Subgrantees to implement and sustain voluntary, High-Quality Preschool Programs in two or more High-Need Communities, and—***

As described in Section (G) and on Table A, the NJDOE will subgrant 95% of its Federal grant award over the grant period to its 19 Subgrantees. Annually, \$16,625,000 (95% of grant funding) will be subgranted to school districts to implement and sustain voluntary, High-Quality Preschool Programs, with the remaining average of \$873,600 (5%) of the State's Federal grant award being used to improve State infrastructure. Subgrantees will use grant funding and existing State funding to offer an estimated total of 1,248 new slots to Eligible Children and other children in High-Need Communities and an estimated total of 1,067 improved slots. Funding for both new and improved slots will support smaller class sizes, Full-Day programs, professional development in research-based curriculum and assessment, coaching, Comprehensive Services, and increased credentials and compensation for certified preschool teachers. Improved State infrastructure costs will include State-level staff to provide direct technical assistance to Subgrantees, a baseline community needs assessment, and an annual site-level evaluation of the Subgrantees included in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan.

(a) Set ambitious and achievable annual targets for the number and percentage of additional Eligible Children to be served during each year of the grant period through, as applicable; and

The New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan sets forth ambitious and achievable targets to increase the number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs during the grant years, and beyond. The High-Quality State Preschool Program currently operating in 35 New Jersey school districts took many years to grow, both in quality and in number of children served. Subgrantees included in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan will benefit from the experiences of these established programs, implementing their best practices and lessons learned. Using the current High-Quality Preschool Program as a model, we estimated enrollment growth throughout the grant period, and set goals that are aggressive and reachable.

Table B details the number and percentage of Eligible Children currently served in the State-funded preschool programs. For the majority of school districts currently funded in New Jersey, eligibility is based on age and residency within the district. For a small number of districts, eligibility is based on age, residency, and free and reduced lunch eligibility. Although

we are able to estimate the number of four-year-old children who are at or below 185% of the federal poverty level across all of our programs, we do not have data on the number of children who are at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Therefore, the numbers represented in Table B are a conservative estimate of the percent of four-year-olds who are at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (60%) based on our free/reduced lunch data. However, when children are enrolled in new grant-funded slots, family income will be verified, allowing us to ensure that children whose families are at or below 200% of the federal poverty level are served using grant dollars.

It is also important to understand that, of the estimated 22,024 Eligible Children currently being served in New Jersey (see Table B, and Table 2 below), we calculate that almost 88% of those children are served within New Jersey’s High-Quality State Preschool Program operating within 35 school districts in the State. The remaining 12% are served in State-funded programs that do not yet meet High-Quality Preschool Program standards.

<b>Section (D) Table 2: Current Eligible Children Served in State-Funded Preschool Programs, High-Quality and Other Programs</b>				
	<b>Four-Year-Olds Served in State-Funded Preschool Programs</b>	<b>Eligible Children Served in State-Funded Preschool Programs</b>	<b>Eligible Children Served in High-Quality Preschool Programs</b>	<b>Eligible Children Served in Other NJDOE-Funded Preschool Programs</b>
<b>Number</b>	31,020	22,024	19,310	2,714
<b>Percentage</b>	26.0%	60.0%	87.7%	12.3%

Included within the 12.3% of children served in State-funded programs that do not yet meet high-quality standards, are an estimated 1,108 Eligible Children who are currently served in Subgrantee school districts. Table 3 illustrates New Jersey’s bold plan to improve these existing slots and add additional slots throughout the grant period.

<b>Section (D)Table 3: Growth of Eligible Children Served in Subgrantee High-Quality Preschool Programs</b>				
	<b>Estimated Eligible Children Served in Improved High-Quality Settings</b>	<b>Estimated Eligible Children Served in New High-Quality Settings</b>	<b>Total Estimated Eligible Children Served in High-Quality Settings</b>	<b>% of Eligible Children Served in High-Quality Slots</b>
<b>Pre Grant Year Current Slots = 1,108</b>	0	0	0	0.0%
<b>Grant Year 1</b>	437	749	1,186	35.3%
<b>Grant Year 2</b>	547	936	1,483	44.1%
<b>Grant Year 3</b>	620	1,061	1,681	50.0%
<b>Grant Year 4</b>	729	1,248	1,977	58.8%

The New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan focuses on increasing the number of improved and new, High-Quality Preschool Program slots for Eligible Children in Subgrantees to 1,977 by the end of the grant period. By 2018, we estimate that almost 59% of Eligible Children will be enrolled in High-Quality Preschool Programs in these High-Need Communities. In addition, we estimate that the total number of slots offered will increase from 1,692 half-day and Full-Day slots (see Table 1 above) to 2,315 High-Quality Full-Day slots (a 36.7% increase in total slots). State funding and grant funding will be used together to serve Eligible Children and other four-year-olds within each High-Need Community and, as a result, the overall universe of four-year-olds served in these communities will increase from 32.6% to 44.5%.

(b) Incorporate in their plan:

The New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan includes both the ambitious expansion of new slots for Eligible Children, and the ambitious improvement of existing slots for Eligible Children. Table 1 in Section (D)(2) above demonstrates the percentage of four-year-old children not yet being served in Subgrantee programs, underscoring a need for new High-Quality slots that will be funded through the grant and with existing State funding. Section (D)(4)(a) discusses the number of Eligible Children currently served by Subgrantees in programs that do not yet meet the standards of New Jersey’s High-Quality State Preschool Program, highlighting the need for improved program slots. Below, sections (D)(4)(b)(i) and (D)(4)(b)(ii) provide greater detail on New Jersey’s ambitious and achievable plan to add 1,248 slots for Eligible Children, while also improving 729 existing slots for Eligible Children, as well as 338 slots for other children in High-Need Communities (a total of 1,067 improved slots).

(i) Ambitious expansion of the number of new slots in State Preschool Programs that meet the definition of High-Quality Preschool Program; and

The New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan is designed to effectively expand the number of new, High-Quality slots being offered to Eligible Children in High-Need Communities. Table 4 below provides greater detail on the number of new slots to be added in individual Subgrantee settings for each year of the grant period.

<b>Section (D)Table 4: Growth of New, High-Quality Preschool Program Slots for Eligible Children</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Total New High-Quality Slots</b>
Pre Grant Year	0
Grant Year 1	749
Grant Year 2	936
Grant Year 3	1,061
Grant Year 4	1,248

Over the course of the grant, we estimate that a total of 1,248 new slots will be available in High-Quality Preschool Programs. As shown on Table A and Table 4 above, new slots will increase each year until targets are met. Year 1 of the grant will see the largest increase in new slots for Eligible Children, and we are confident that these slots will be available starting in September of 2015. Sixteen of the 19 Subgrantees were included in an NJDOE-funded needs assessment in 2008 (see Attachment 33, Example from a 2008 Needs Assessment, on Appendix page 679). While an updated needs assessment is needed, the findings of the 2009 report suggest that appropriate space is available in these district, community provider and Head Start programs for Year 1 of the grant. Between January and September of 2015, participating school districts, private providers and Head Start programs will have an opportunity to use grant funding for minor remodeling needed to enhance these spaces to meet quality standards (see Section (G)(1) and Budget Narrative for budget details on pages 123 and 127).

In Years 2 through 4 of the grant period, more new slots will be made available, but at a slower rate than in Year 1. Before opening these additional slots, Subgrantees will need sufficient time to process information from the updated needs assessment conducted in early 2015. Additional district, community provider and Head Start locations will be identified during this time period, and grant funding may be used for any minor remodeling that may be needed to

ensure that these spaces are appropriate for preschoolers (see Section (G)(1) and Budget Narrative for budget details).

As described in sections (E)(1), (E)(2), and (E)(4) each new slot will meet all elements of High-Quality Preschool Programs, closely following the implementation of the State's existing, nationally recognized High-Quality Preschool Program. For example, Eligible Children served in new slots will benefit from Full-Day programs with small class sizes of 15 children per class, and an appropriately certified teacher and teacher assistant. Subgrantees will compensate preschool teaching staff comparably to other district teaching staff, and Head Start and other contracted community providers will compensate their teaching staff according to district salary guides. Grant-funded NJDOE liaisons will work closely with Subgrantees to ensure that these and all other elements of High-Quality Preschool Programs are implemented, and achieved (see Section (C)(1)(e) on page 45).

(ii) Ambitious improvement of existing State Preschool Program slots to bring them to the level of a High-Quality Preschool Program by extending programs from half-day to Full-Day; limiting class size and decreasing child to staff ratios; employing and compensating a teacher with a bachelor's degree; or providing Comprehensive Services.

Within the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan, 15 of the 19 Subgrantees have existing preschool programs that do not currently meet the standards of High-Quality Preschool Programs. State funding already provided to these school districts will be used to support improved, High-Quality Preschool Program slots. Subgrantees will redirect existing dollars to convert 1,067 existing slots into High-Quality Preschool Program slots. State regulations allow all resident preschool-aged children in these 15 Subgrantee districts to be served with State funding, so children served in these slots will be both Eligible Children and other children within the community.

Table 5 below provides details on the number of improved slots in Subgrantee settings for each year of the grant period. As shown on Table A and on Table 5, we estimate that existing State funding will be used to improve a total of 1,067 slots by the end of the grant period. Almost 730 Eligible Children will benefit from these improved slots, along with 338 other children. As described above, Subgrantees may use State funding to offer slots to any resident preschool-aged child, providing the opportunity for Subgrantees to include a more economically diverse subsection of their population in each classroom.

<b>Section (D)Table 5: Growth of Improved, High-Quality Preschool Program Slots</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Eligible Children in Improved Slots</b>	<b>Other Children in Improved Slots</b>	<b>Total Improved High-Quality Slots</b>
Pre Grant Year			0
Grant Year 1	437	203	640
Grant Year 2	547	254	800
Grant Year 3	620	287	907
Grant Year 4	729	338	1,067

As described in sections (E)(1), (E)(2), and (E)(4) on pages 82, 84 and 87, each improved preschool slot will meet all elements of High-Quality Preschool Programs, closely following the implementation of New Jersey’s existing High-Quality State Preschool Program. Subgrantees with existing State-funded preschool programs are already required to have a certified teacher and assistant in every classroom, and district teaching staff are already compensated at the level of other district teaching staff. However, based on annual data submitted to the DECE, we estimate that fewer than half of these teachers hold preschool through third grade (P-3) certification. Section (G)(1) on page 122 describes how grant funding will be used to make scholarship funding available for teachers to pursue P-3 certification.

Many existing preschool program slots are also in half-day and/or Full-Day classrooms with a maximum class size of 18. During the grant period, all Subgrantees will be required to reduce class sizes to 15, and offer developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, Full-Day programs supported by high-quality professional development for all staff. In addition, children with disabilities will be included in each classroom with appropriate individualized accommodations and supports. As with all new slots, grant-funded NJDOE liaisons will work closely with Subgrantees to ensure that these and all other elements of High-Quality Preschool Programs are met (see Sections (E)(1), page 82, (E)(2), page 84 and (E)(4), page 87). See Table (D)(4) for a description of the method for improving slots in each of the individual Subgrantees participating in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan.

Note: Applicants may receive up to the full 12 points if they address only (D)(4)(b)(i) or (D)(4)(ii) or if they address both (D)(4)(i) and (ii);

***(5) The State, in coordination with each Subgrantee, intends to sustain High-Quality Preschool Programs after the grant period, including any non-Federal support that the State or each Subgrantee commits to contribute.***

The State is committed to sustaining the High-Quality Preschool Program slots that are improved and expanded as a result of the Preschool Expansion Grant. Since the inception of New Jersey's High-Quality Preschool Program in 1998, the State has increased funding for high-quality programs and served additional High-Need children each year. Even during tumultuous economic times, when many states were decreasing their funding for early childhood programs, New Jersey continued to allocate more State funding for preschool. Table B shows New Jersey's substantial commitment to High-Quality Preschool Programs from FY11 to FY14, and that commitment has increased to over \$650 million for FY15.

At the end of the grant period, New Jersey will continue to dedicate funding to High-Quality Preschool Programs, including funding for all of the additional slots that are improved and expanded as a result of the Preschool Expansion Grant. Each Subgrantee school district will be incorporated into New Jersey's High-Quality Preschool Program, and will receive Preschool Education Aid (PEA) in accordance with SFRA. Districts will submit an annual Preschool Program Plan, including projected enrollment by setting: district, community provider, and Head Start. PEA will then be calculated based on approved enrollment projections, and the per pupil amounts established in the SFRA. In order to receive PEA, all Subgrantees must maintain the standards of New Jersey High-Quality Preschool Program.

Evidence for selection criterion (D):

- A letter of support or preliminary binding agreement, such as a preliminary MOU, from each Subgrantee attesting to the Subgrantee's participation.
- Table (D)(4) and Table A. (See Tables (D)(4) and A in Excel spreadsheets)
- Any other supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers.

### **Selection Criterion E. Collaborating with Each Subgrantee and Ensuring Strong Partnerships.**

The extent to which the State has an ambitious and achievable plan to ensure that each Subgrantee is effectively implementing High-Quality Preschool Programs, including a description of—

To ensure the effective implementation of High-Quality Preschool Programs, the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan will use the model that has worked so well for our High-Quality State Preschool Program. As a state agency, we will continue to nurture our partnerships with and among Head Start agencies, private providers and school districts, as well as our partners in other state agencies. Nearly 55% of the children in our High-Quality State Preschool Program are served in Head Start and private provider programs, and Environmental Rating Scale scores demonstrate that quality is consistently high across settings (see Section B, Commitment to State Preschool Programs, ECERS-R Scores page 30). Through the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan, we intend to replicate this success by working with district, Head Start and private provider partners in 19 High-Need Communities to meet the High-Quality components of the High-Quality State Preschool Program by providing:

- A certified teacher and assistant for each class of 15 children;
- Instructional salaries that are comparable to salaries in K-12 school districts;
- A developmentally appropriate, comprehensive curriculum (HighScope, Tools of the Mind, Creative Curriculum and Curiosity Corner) and assessment (Teaching Strategies GOLD® (TS GOLD®), Child Observation Record, or Work Sampling System), that is aligned with the NJ Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards;
- District and private provider/Head Start provider collaboration (via district/provider contracts);
- A Full-Day (6-hour minimum educational day), 180-day program;
- Inclusion of children with disabilities, with individual accommodations;
- Support for home languages of English language learners (ELL) providing dual language classrooms whenever possible;
- Coaches (master teachers) for in-class follow up, with inclusion and ELL coaches;
- Support for preschool children with potential difficulties and for children with disabilities (pre intervention and referral staff);

- Partnerships that promote families’ access to services that support learning and development;
- Comprehensive Services for diverse families (via family workers, community parent involvement specialists (CPIs), and social workers);
- Fiscal monitoring and supports;
- Support for healthy children and the use of evidence-based health and safety standards (via district nurses); and
- A continuous evaluation and improvement cycle.

The plan below describes how the New Jersey Department of Education’s (NJDOE’s) Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) will collaborate with school districts, private providers and Head Start agencies to ensure that the elements of the High-Quality Preschool Program are implemented.

<b>E. Plan to ensure that each Subgrantee is effectively implementing High-Quality Preschool Programs</b>		
<b>Goal:</b> New Jersey’s goal is to create a system of oversight and collaboration to ensure that the components of New Jersey’s High-Quality Preschool Program are in place.		
<b>Outcome goals by the end of the grant</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All 19 school districts and participating private and Head Start providers will be implementing the components of the High-Quality State Preschool Program.</li> <li>2. Reach 59% of Eligible Children and over 45% of all four-year-olds in Subgrantee communities.</li> <li>3. Include the participating schools and providers in the High-Quality State Preschool Program’s monitoring system for both fiscal practices and the implementation of quality components.</li> </ol>		
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
<i>Establish school district and provider partnerships and coordinate planning</i>		
Assign DECE Early Childhood (EC) Specialists to work with the school districts and providers	4/2015 to 6/2015	DECE, EC Specialists
Conduct a needs assessment to get an understanding of the specific needs of the community and to figure out where children will be served, and what quality improvements will be needed	4/2015 to 7/2015	Higher Education Institution, School Districts
Plan for minor facilities improvements to ensure that sites are safe and appropriate for children	7/2015 to 8/2015	School Districts, EC Specialists
Make minor facilities improvements over the school year	9/2015 to 8/2016 9/2016 to 8/2017 9/2017 to 8/2018	School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start

Develop a Four-year Preschool Program Plan and Budget, including a Transition Plan	7/2015, and annually updated each year in the Fall	EC Specialists, School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
Develop and sign provider contracts	7/2015 to 8/2015, and redeveloped/signed annually in the Spring	EC Specialists, School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
Set up district and provider staffing	4/2015 to 6/2015	EC Specialists, School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
Implement the program plan by connecting to professional development and community-based resources	9/2015 to 8/2016, and throughout the grant period	EC Specialists, School Districts, Training Academy
<i>Monitor and minimize costs</i>		
Review budgets to ensure that the district and provider budgets align with the proposed program plan	7/2015, and annually updated each year in the Fall	EC Specialists
Identify fiscal staff to regularly review provider and Head Start budgets and quarterly expenditure reports to ensure that expenditures are reasonable	7/2015 to 9/2015	School Districts
Meet with district fiscal personnel to ensure understanding of how budgets should be completed to show the contribution of each funding source	7/2015 to 9/2015	DECE Fiscal Manager, EC Specialists, School Districts
Conduct random audits of contracted private providers on an annual basis	Annually, starting 9/2017	NJDOE Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance (OFAC)
Submit an independent audit of school district finances	Annually	Independent auditing firm, School Districts
For providers receiving \$500,000 or more, conduct independent audits, as per NJ OMB Circular (see Attachment 35, on Appendix page 707)	Annually	Independent auditing firm, Private Providers and Head Start
<i>Monitor quality and impact of district and provider programs</i>		
Enroll sites in New Jersey's Tiered Quality Improvement System (TQRIS), Grow New Jersey Kids (GNJK)	7/2015 to 9/2015	EC Specialists, School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
Include programs in the Self-Assessment Validation System (SAVS) evaluation	5/2016 to 8/2016, and on an annual basis	EC Specialists, School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
Include programs in the third party evaluation (including child assessments) which will be conducted in the Fall and Spring, in Year 1, and annually in the Spring of subsequent years	Year 1: Fall and Spring Years 2-4: Spring	Higher Education Institution, School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start

Work with program directors, site supervisors and principals to support quality improvements	9/2015 to 8/2016, and throughout the grant period	EC Specialists, Training Academy, School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
Use the results of the needs assessment to identify minor remodeling needs to ensure safe and appropriate environments for preschoolers	6/2015 to 8/2015	EC Specialists, School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
Enter children in NJ SMART, the State's longitudinal data system, and follow children's performance in the elementary grades, including performance on the NJ Kindergarten Entry Assessment (NJKEA)	9/2015	School Districts
<i>Make community connections to maximize outreach</i>		
Family support personnel (CPIS, social workers family workers) work closely with County Councils for Young Children (CCYCs), Family Success Centers, and Central Intake hubs to recruit hard-to-reach families	6/2015 to 8/2015	School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start

***(1) The roles and responsibilities of the State and Subgrantee in implementing the project plan.***

Roles and responsibilities of the State

The DECE will have oversight of the school districts and private/Head Start providers (providers) included in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan. To meet the needs of the school districts and providers in our High-Quality State Preschool Program now, we have a staff of 10 EC Specialists who create program and learning standards and guidance based on current research on early childhood education (see role of the EC Specialist, Attachment 34 on Appendix page 706). DECE staff will develop modules and other materials designed to facilitate implementation, and also provide regional and on-site support to the key district staff who turnkey the information and provide in-class support. To meet the needs of the expansion districts, we will add 3 EC Specialists who will be responsible for:

- Reviewing program plans to ensure that they meet the requirements set forth in the State's Administrative Code, contracts and guidance (for more details see Section (B)(4) on page 27);
- Providing support on specific topics (e.g., early literacy, assessment, math, science, dual language learners) and training for key staff in assigned school districts;

- Conducting annual budget and program plan reviews to ensure that the program plan is meeting quality standards and that budgeted costs match the proposed plan;
- Assisting school districts as they set up their mixed-delivery system;
- Conducting on-site support of GNJK and working with the local Quality Improvement Specialist (QI Specialist) to guide programs through the TQRIS; and
- Conducting the district-wide SAVS on an annual basis.

#### Roles and responsibilities of School Districts

School districts will receive grant funds, and will then enter into contracts with participating community-based and Head Start providers to serve Eligible Children. Each school district will use a portion of the grant funding to sustain costs related to coaches, preschool intervention and referral staff, and other staff to support English language learners, children with special needs, and in class support of professional development. The school districts will be responsible for:

- Developing contracts with community-based private providers and Head Start programs;
- Overseeing the implementation of the elements of the High-Quality Preschool Program, as described in the State’s Administrative Code, contract and guidance (see Section (B)(4) on page 27);
- Supporting the implementation of GNJK;
- Tracking the certification of teachers in provider settings;
- Conducting quarterly expenditure reviews of provider expenses;
- Recruiting families; and
- Providing the following support positions at the ratios designated in the State’s Administrative Code:
  1. Early childhood supervisor or contact
  2. Master teachers (coaches)
  3. Preschool intervention and referral staff
  4. Nurses
  5. Fiscal specialist (for six or more providers)
  6. Social workers (for schools)
  7. Community and parent involvement specialist (CPIS)

Roles and responsibilities of participating community providers and Head Start programs:

Participating community-based and Head Start providers will be responsible for adhering to each of the program elements as described in the State's Administrative Code and contract. Head Start sites will be required to adhere to both Head Start and State Preschool regulations, and the highest standard will prevail when conflicting. For instance, although Head Start allows up to 20 children in a class, the higher standard of 15 (dictated by the High-Quality State Preschool Program) will be implemented. Providers will be responsible for:

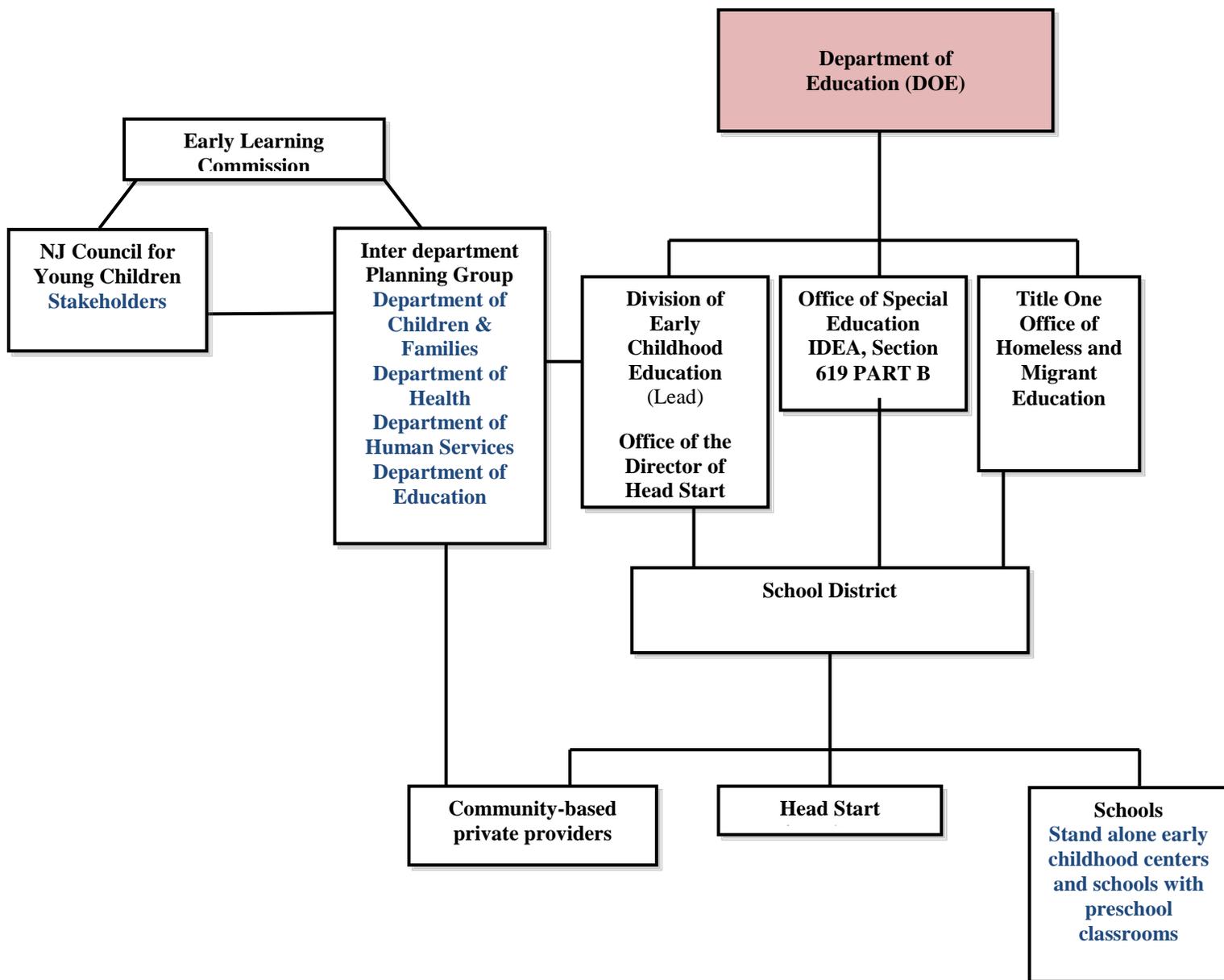
- Following the Preschool Provider Contract;
- Participating in GNJK;
- Providing a program director;
- Providing a certified teacher and teacher assistant for each classroom of 15 children;
- Providing a family worker;
- Submitting quarterly financial reports; and
- Participating in professional development, and working collaboratively with the district staff (coaches, fiscal specialists, supervisors, CPIS).

***(2) How the State plans to implement High-Quality Preschool Programs, including the organizational capacity and existing infrastructure of the Subgrantee to provide High-Quality Preschool Programs, either directly or indirectly through an Early Learning Provider or Providers, and coordinate the delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs.***

The DECE is already set up to administer the Preschool Expansion Program. Currently we work with 35 fully funded school districts (including 370 private providers and Head Start programs) and 108 partially funded school districts. Although the DECE will need to add 3 EC Specialists to accommodate the needs of the preschool expansion school districts, the structure for implementing the High-Quality Preschool Program is simply an extension of the structure of the current High-Quality State Preschool Program, with the added benefit of our Inter Department collaboration (see the Organizational Structure below). The DECE works very closely with the NJDOE's Offices of Title I and Migrant and Homeless Education, streamlining our programs and funding, as well as the Office of Special Education. In recent years, we have developed a close partnership with the State administrators of the Departments of Health, Children and Families and Human Services (see Section (B)(3), page 23 for details).

To administer the expansion of the High-Quality Preschool Program, the 3 additional EC Specialists will work closely with the school districts to set up partnerships with community-based providers and Head Start agencies to maximize the number of Eligible Children served. School districts will describe how they plan to serve the Eligible Children in their program plan and budget (see Attachments 26 and 36 on Appendix pages 603 and 711), and will include their plan for implementing each component of the program. After the assigned EC Specialist is satisfied that the school district has an adequate plan, an approval letter will be sent to the school district, reiterating the agreed upon plan. Provider contracts will be developed (see Contract Template, Attachment 25 on Appendix page 600) and signed by both the provider director and the school district. New Jersey Administrative Code, 6A:13A, Elements of High Quality Preschool Programs and the provider contract, clearly describe the roles of both school district and provider, in addition to providing steps to follow when there is a dispute, or when a provider is not implementing a High-Quality Program.

## Organizational Structure



***(3) How the State will ensure that each Subgrantee minimizes local administrative costs.***

Like the current school districts and providers in New Jersey’s High-Quality State Preschool Program, the expansion districts and providers will also develop their budgets using budget workbook and instructions (see Attachments 36 and 37 on Appendix pages 711 and 720). Separate budget forms and instructions are used by districts and providers in order to address specific allowable and non-allowable expenditures and staff ratios unique to each type of program. The school district’s fiscal specialist (or other fiscal staff) will work with each private provider to develop their budgets, ensure that providers are following all applicable budget instructions, and check that budget projections are reasonable. For example, non-teaching staff

salaries are reviewed for reasonable increases each year, and providers follow a salary guide for site directors (see the director's salary scale in the provider budget worksheet, Attachment 37 on Appendix page 720).

School districts will incorporate all provider budgets within the overall district budget and submit a budget for the entire program to the DECE for review and approval. EC Specialists will then review each school district's budget, comparing projected expenditures to prior year budgets. Budgets are carefully reviewed for efficiencies and, in addition to checking that all projections are allowable, EC Specialists will make suggestions to minimize administrative costs whenever possible. During the budget review process, the EC Specialists will also review each district's program plan and ensure that budget projections align with the plan.

***(4) How the State and Subgrantee will monitor the Early Learning Providers to ensure they are delivering High-Quality Preschool Programs.***

Both the quality of the implementation of the High-Quality Preschool Program components and fiscal practices of programs are monitored (see also Section (C)(2)(a), page 50). For participating providers, the provider contract sets a minimum acceptable Environmental Rating Score to ensure a certain standard of quality (e.g. a 5.0 on the ECERS-R), in addition to the structural components that are also described in the contract (e.g. maximum of 15 children in a classroom, Family Worker at a ratio of 1:45, a minimum of a 6-hour school day, etc.). Participating school districts use the district-wide SAVS to measure the implementation of each quality component in both provider and district settings (see Attachment 7 on Appendix page 274). Early Childhood Supervisors and coaches work with directors, principals and teachers to evaluate classroom quality, and when the quality of a program is in question, an external evaluator conducts the evaluation to ensure objectivity. These practices will now be integrated with the implementation of GNJK. A rating from 1 to 5 stars will be assigned to a site, based on both the results of onsite visits from William Paterson University that will use structured classroom quality observational assessments on a sampling of the site's classrooms, in addition to a validation of the other program and learning standards that are required for each level. In addition to this process, the expansion school districts (and their provider partners) will be included in the longitudinal third party evaluation of the preschool program, except that the new school districts will have a baseline evaluation and will be evaluated annually instead of biannually.

***(5) How the State and the Subgrantee will coordinate plans related to assessments, data sharing, instructional tools, family engagement, cross-sector and comprehensive services efforts, professional development, and workforce and leadership development.***

A coordinated planning process will be critical to successful implementation of the High-Quality Preschool Program. EC specialists will assist in the implementation of the program and professional development plan, by ensuring that their assigned district preschool programs (including providers) are systematically moving toward full implementation of a High-Quality Preschool Program. They will support the continuous cycle of program improvement to reach a high level of quality through four tools (see also Section (C)(2)(a), page 51):

*Grow NJ Kids* – this site-level tool is designed to assist sites in elevating quality across five areas: Safe, Healthy Learning Environment; Curriculum and Learning Environment; Family and Community Engagement; Workforce and Professional Development; and Administration and Management. GNJK will be used by participating preschool expansion districts and providers. Ratings will be assigned and reassessed every three years. Participating school districts will collect and aggregate the self-assessment component of GNJK to inform focus areas for improvement.

*N.J.A.C. 6A:13A, Elements of High Quality Preschool Programs* – describes rules and regulations from class size and teacher compensation requirements to family engagement and staff qualifications. The rules apply to all settings: provider, Head Start, and school district.

*Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines* – describes more detailed recommendations in providing a High-Quality Preschool Program, including sections on: Community Collaboration; Recruitment and Outreach; Administration; Educational Components (i.e., Curriculum and Assessment, Inclusion, English Language Learners); Continuity and Transition; Health, Safety and Nutrition; Family Services; and Program Evaluation and Improvement.

*The Self-Assessment Validation System* – This district-wide assessment is designed to ensure consistency in quality across school districts and settings by measuring the quality of implementation of each component, and it also considers the results of classroom quality measures, child performance-based assessments, staff and parent surveys, and practices across each area (See Section (C)(2)(a), page 51 for a chart demonstrating each area). Each criterion has a set of indicators to measure the extent to which the criterion is met (not yet, in progress, fully met). For criterion that are not “fully met”, districts must develop an improvement plan

showing how progress will be made over the school year. The improvement plan is then tied to the district's preschool program plan. The SAVS is conducted annually, and a validation occurs every three years.

EC Specialists will also assist school districts as they choose professional development topics. Cross-sector professional development will be provided by the Training Academy (see Section (C)(1)(f), page 46). A cadre of certified and endorsed trainers will provide training to the district EC supervisors, master teachers, Preschool Intervention and Referral Team (PIRT), and health staff who will support the implementation of GNJK in each of its five areas, equipping them to work with provider directors and principals. The Academy will, for instance, provide training in the 5 protective factors of Strengthening Families (which is under revision), implementing curricula and performance-based assessments with fidelity, administering and using screening information, involving families in decision making, and more. The results of the SAVS and the GNJK self-assessment will help to inform the focus of the Training Academy.

To ensure fidelity of the program quality components, DECE EC Specialists will reinforce concepts at regular meetings with key district staff, including early childhood supervisors, master teachers, PIRT, fiscal specialists, nurses, and CPIS, with each group meeting separately. Our focus during the 2013-2014 school year, for example, was helping early childhood supervisors and master teachers to use their child data (Work Sampling System, TS GOLD®, and Child Observation Record) more effectively. EC supervisors focused on understanding ways to improve the reliability and validity of the assessments, as well as what children's performance means for program improvement. They collected and shared their child assessment data at four EC supervisor meetings throughout the school year, while master teachers focused on helping teachers to use the data to inform instruction.

When children enter any State-funded preschool program they are assigned a unique Student Identifier (SID) and are entered into New Jersey's State longitudinal data system, NJ SMART. As part of the RTT-ELC grant, we are establishing data sharing agreements with our State agency partners to link data from our information systems in an effort to better understand each of our program's efficacy (see Section (C)(2)(b), page 52 for details, and Data Questions and Objectives on Attachment 38 on Appendix page 730). In addition to sharing data at a State level, we will be able to provide Early Learning Programs with feedback on their impact by reporting on children's progress at kindergarten entry and beyond.

***(6) How the State and Subgrantee will coordinate, but not supplant, the delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs funded under this grant with existing services for preschool-aged children including, if applicable, State Preschool Programs and programs and services supported through title I of the ESEA, part C and section 619 of part B of IDEA, subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act, the Head Start Act, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act.***

Over the last few years, we have developed a strong system of coordination by meeting regularly with the Inter Departmental Planning Group, the NJCYC and the Early Learning Commission (see Section (B)(3), page 24 for how the State aligns programs). This collaboration has helped us to implement an efficient mixed-delivery system of early learning programs that meet the needs of young children and their families across State-funded preschool programs, Child Care, Head Start agencies, Title I programs, programs for homeless children, and programs for young children with disabilities.

In addition to coordination at the program office level, the NJDOE has established a strong system of checks and balances for fiscal accountability across program funding sources. For example, school districts are required by State Law (N.J.S.A. 18A:4-14) to maintain a uniform system of financial bookkeeping and reporting that is consistent with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and with the classifications established by the National Center for Education Statistics for use in all school districts. State-funded preschool programs have their own unique revenue source and program codes for budgeting and reporting expenditures, allowing school districts to track preschool funding separately from other State and Federal funding (Title I, IDEA, McKinney-Vento, etc.). Any school district receiving grant dollars will receive unique program codes for tracking grant expenditures related to Eligible Children. At the end of each school year, State Law (N.J.S.A. 18A:23-1) requires school districts to submit an annual independent audit and provide the NJDOE with the resulting Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) detailing all expenditures from all funding sources in the prior school year. Instructions for the CAFR are updated annually, and include guidance specific to the preschool program. Auditors are provided with detailed audit instructions, which also include information specific to the preschool program.

To ensure that contracted providers coordinate funding appropriately, district fiscal staff will track expenditures on a quarterly basis to ensure that funding is being spent properly. Quarterly expenditure reports will be used throughout the year to make adjustments to payments,

approve budget transfers, and show documentation of funding from other sources (Child Care, Head Start, etc.). To spot check provider fiscal practices and district oversight, audits are conducted by the NJDOE's Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance (OFAC) on a random selection of providers each year. In addition, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requires a single audit of providers receiving \$500,000 or more of State or Federal funds (see Attachment 35 on Appendix page 707).

***(7) How the Subgrantee will integrate, to the extent practicable, High-Quality Preschool Programs for Eligible Children within economically diverse, inclusive settings, including those that serve children from families with incomes above 200% of the Federal Poverty Line.***

New Jersey has a history of promoting High-Quality programs that encourage both economic diversity and inclusion of children with disabilities. Starting in 2005, the NJDOE created a small grant program, the Early Launch to Learning Initiative (ELLI), providing funding for four-year-old low-income children (defined as eligible for free or reduced lunch). Districts participating in the ELLI program are required to implement many of the components of the High-Quality State Preschool Program. ELLI classrooms must include a mix of children with disabilities, ELLI-funded children, and tuition or locally funded children. Similar to the ELLI grant, the Preschool Expansion Grant only allows funding to be expended on children who are from low-income families, defined as at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

To ensure economic diversity within each classroom, the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan leverages existing State funding provided to the participating High-Need Communities to both enhance existing preschool slots and add additional slots for Eligible Children. School districts already receiving state funding for preschool are permitted to serve any resident three- and four-year-old child, not just four-year-olds who meet an income eligibility criterion. Combining Preschool Expansion Grant funding with current State funding will allow these school districts to serve a combination of Eligible Children and other children within the community, naturally allowing for a more economically diverse population of children in each classroom (See also Section (D)(1) on page 50). Preschoolers with disabilities will also be included in each classroom serving Eligible Children, following the model already established within the State's High-Quality Preschool Program. DECE staff will provide support to district staff (inclusion master teachers and Preschool Intervention and Referral Team), who will model best practices for the inclusion of preschoolers in general education classrooms.

***(8) How the Subgrantee will deliver High-Quality Preschool Programs to Eligible Children, including Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports, such as those who have disabilities or developmental delays; who are English learners; who reside on "Indian lands" as that term is defined by section 8013(7) of the ESEA; who are migrant; who are "homeless," as defined in subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act; who are in the child welfare system; who reside in rural or tribal areas; who are from military families; and other children as identified by the State.***

Each school district will submit their Four-year Preschool Program Plan and Budget (see Attachments 26 and 36 on Appendix pages 603 and 711), describing how it will meet the needs of each of the populations in its community that are identified in the Spring 2015 needs assessment. The needs assessment (conducted by a state college or university) will proactively identify each population of Eligible Children. Based on the results of the needs assessment, school districts will describe in their Four-year Preschool Program Plan (plan), how and where they will serve each of the following groups (where appropriate): children with disabilities, ELLs, children in migrant families, children in homeless families and children in military families. Eligible Children will be served in school district buildings and contracts will be set up to serve Eligible Children in Head Start, and other community-based provider settings. The plan will be reviewed by the assigned EC Specialist from the DECE, who will advise district and other staff, as needed.

The plan will describe what accommodations will be made to address the unique needs of each group. For instance, the plan will demonstrate how the Home Language Survey will be shared with teachers and directors/principals to address the needs of ELLs, and will describe what accommodations will be made for their families, including assisting with translation. In the early stages of setting up the program, the EC Specialist will meet regularly with the school district staff and the community provider network, ensuring two-way lines of communication.

Using Preschool Expansion Grant and existing State funding, school districts will provide the appropriate staff to ensure that the needs of each individual child are being met, and will collaborate with Head Start on enrollment procedures and services. Community Parent Involvement Specialists (CPIS) (see Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines, Role of the CPIS, Attachment 5, on Appendix page 241), social workers (see Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines, Role of the Social Worker, Attachment 5, on Appendix page 241) and nurses (see Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines, Role of the Nurse, Attachment 5 on Appendix page 237) will support community-based providers in accommodating the unique

needs of families. Family workers (see Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines, Role of the Family Worker, Attachment 5 on Appendix page 241) in provider sites will be on hand to connect families to Central Intake hubs, Family Success Centers and CCYCs, where they can find resources from housing and medical homes, to support from other parents.

Teachers in all settings will need extra guidance and support to garner specific strategies to accommodate the needs of each group. The Community Parent Involvement Specialists (CPIS) and Head Start staff will collaborate to provide this information, and will rely on DECE and Training Academy staff for support.

***(9) How the State will ensure the Subgrantee implements culturally and linguistically responsive outreach and communication efforts to enroll children from families with Eligible Children, including isolated or hard-to-reach families; helps families build protective factors; and engages parents and families (e.g., builds capacity to support children's learning and development) as decision-makers in their children's education.***

We have had a great deal of success delivering the High-Quality State Preschool Program to a diverse population of preschool children, and with Central Intake hubs and CCYCs, we will be even better equipped to recruit children who would benefit the most from the High-Quality Preschool Program. Special positions, including CPIS (who lead school districts' Early Childhood Advisory Councils), program-wide social workers, and provider family workers will play a role in recruiting families and working closely with Central Intake hubs, CCYCs and Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) to recruit children from families with Eligible Children, including isolated or hard-to-reach families.

For programs participating in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan, recruitment and outreach strategies will be based on proven strategies utilized in the High-Quality State Preschool Program, as well as those described in a report conducted by the NJCYC: *More than Marketing: a New Jersey Study on Outreach to Underserved Populations: Ages Birth to Five* (see Executive Summary on Attachment 39 on Appendix page 735). Issues related to a child's development (such as age of toilet training), and issues of culture (such as immigration status and home language), and other individual circumstances will not prevent Eligible Children from receiving services. Most importantly, school districts will design their recruitment of underserved populations based on the results of the community needs assessment. In the High-Quality State Preschool Program, individual school districts use a variety of recruitment and

outreach strategies to ensure that all populations of children are included in the High-Quality Preschool Program. Strategies include community fairs, flyers/advertisements in local community agencies, doctors’ offices, clinics, churches restaurants, libraries, newspapers, realtors, public television, public radio, community banners, open houses, and flyers sent home with older students in the school district. Strategies specific to each target population are described in Table 3 below.

<b>Table 3. Strategies to Recruit and Retain Hard to Reach Families</b>	
Disabilities or developmental delays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate with Early Intervention at least monthly to ensure that families of entering 3-year-olds are aware of their placement options, and to ensure seamless transitions.</li> <li>• Provide Child Find Information on all public awareness strategies and materials (in languages relevant to community populations) that clearly indicate to the community that early childhood programs are available to children with special needs.</li> </ul>
English language learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create public awareness strategies and materials in languages relevant to service populations.</li> <li>• Clarify immigrant eligibility rules and simplify enrollment processes to prevent fear of repercussions for enrolling young children in publicly funded preschool programs.</li> <li>• Use trusted messengers from within the immigrant community to explain the importance of early education programs, and who can reach families through face-to-face conversations.</li> </ul>
Migrant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute a list of Head Start/private providers and school-based programs to migrant parents. The information will be provided in families’ home languages.</li> <li>• Work with CCR&amp;Rs, Central Intake hubs and the CCYC to ensure that families receive all eligible services (e.g. State Preschool Program, Home Visiting, child health insurance programs, etc.).</li> <li>• Promote awareness of the unique factors that impact the lives of migrant children by offering professional development and training to service providers.</li> <li>• Identify programs to offer Full-Day services of 12–15 hours duration during peak harvest season.</li> <li>• Establish agreements or MOUs with Head Start and other preschool programs to hold</li> </ul>

slots for a limited number of migrant children.

- Work with community agencies and service providers to offer an array of healthcare services that include health, dental, mental health, nutrition, disabilities services, etc.
- Offer a day of screening and immunizations, and distribute information within the migrant community.

#### Homeless

- Contact homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, transient housing and interfaith housing sites on a regular basis to inquire if there are any children who may be eligible for the program. All community shelters and housing facilities will be given applications, brochures and contact information. The community assessment will also help target areas for recruitment.
- Provide information about the program to the Department of Children and Families' Division of Child Protection and Permanency, community agencies and churches. The district CPIS and the ECAC will ensure that parents are aware of programs providing services to the homeless.
- Set up a system of communication among emergency shelters, Early Intervention, Early Head Start and Head Start, Child Care, and State Preschool, and provide cross-training of staff and parents.
- Develop relationships between the school homeless liaisons and Head Start agencies to identify and enroll children in Head Start and Early Head Start programs.
- Use "Release of Information" agreements between community agencies and school districts to expedite enrollment into early education programs.
- Use Child Find to locate and enroll families. Include families residing in emergency shelters (domestic abuse and homeless), transitional housing programs, and temporary housing arrangements in Child Find efforts.

#### Child Welfare

- Promote the development of MOUs between agencies serving children in the child welfare system (courts, child protection, Early Intervention, special education, early care and education) to improve collaboration, provide consistency in the referral process and reduce confusion about the roles of the various key players in meeting the developmental needs of children.
- Expand the capacity of quality early childhood education programs to enroll at risk children in the child welfare system by requiring publicly funded programs to give priority enrollment to children in the child welfare system (including those who still live at home but are under child welfare supervision).

## Military

- Add a question about family military service on the enrollment application.
- Advertise early learning program options for military families at military installations.
- Connect with Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN), which uses a Contact Management system at intake to track services to various populations including family military status.

Public awareness strategies and materials in languages relevant to the community's families will clearly indicate that early childhood programs are available to children with special needs (with the appropriate Child Find information). Research will be conducted to determine which recruitment method(s) is most effective in reaching hard-to-reach populations and/or under-served groups.

Family workers and CPISs will provide educational information and other resources to families, including connecting families to Central Intake hubs. Central Intake hubs function as a single point of entry to streamline access for pregnant/parenting families, educators, and providers to health care resources, social services, and other community supports in all 21 counties. Three funding sources align to support Central Intake activities: a 2012 Help Me Grow grant expanded developmental screening and health system linkages, and the federal New Jersey Early Childhood Comprehensive System (ECCS) grant, and the RTT-ELC grant. Together, these funding sources and programs ensure a unified effort in building this comprehensive approach.

To empower New Jersey's High-Need families to be leaders and partners in their children's early learning and development, by 2018 New Jersey will have trained at least 2,800 early childhood educators, community partners, and GNJK participants in the five Strengthening Families Protective Factors (with RTT-ELC funds). We also plan to use an evidence-based progression of Statewide family engagement standards to put all 1,790 programs in GNJK on a path toward improved, two-way communication with New Jersey's diverse families. In addition, the grant is supporting a Statewide network of CCYCs with 51% parent leadership. Parent/family input and feedback, i.e., a "family feedback loop," is central to the success of the preschool expansion effort. The CCYC will provide parents with leadership development opportunities to work as partners with State/local agencies and strengthen decision-making that supports children, families and communities. In addition, the State-level NJCYC will partner with local CCYCs on

family engagement enhancements—father involvement, adult and family literacy, and intergenerational activities.

***(10) How the State will ensure strong partnerships between each Subgrantee and LEAs or other Early Learning Providers, as appropriate, including a description of how the State will ensure that each Subgrantee—***

(a) Partners with LEAs or other Early Learning Providers, as appropriate, to carry out activities that provide children and their families with successful transitions from preschool into kindergarten; and

A plan for Preschool-Kindergarten transition will be submitted with the school district's P-3 Transition Plan (see Preschool through Third Grade Transition Plan, Section CPP #2, Continuum of Early Learning and Development, page 138) that is part of the Four-year Preschool Program Plan. Each school district will have a P-3 Transition Team composed of a facilitator, parents, preschool providers, Head Start providers, principals, community leaders, Early Intervention staff, and school personnel including preschool, elementary, bilingual, and special education teachers, and specialists in subject areas, curriculum and assessment experts, and P-3 data experts. One of the tasks of the team will be to create a plan for the transition of children from the preschool program into grades K-3 as outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:13A-6.1 (Attachment 6, on Appendix page 272). The following will be included in the Transition Plan:

- A system for gathering information about children prior to the start of each school year, including the results of performance-based assessments, with a focus on all areas of development and learning;
- Specific transition activities, such as visits to the classrooms, distribution of home learning activities, and the dissemination of information such as registration guidelines, teacher expectations and placement options to families through meetings, workshops, written correspondence, etc;
- A system to provide information to families on the transition to and from each level from preschool through third grade, including registration guidelines, placement options, teacher expectations, and health and nutrition information;
- Goals to ensure seamless supports for all children as they move through each year, including Summer, from preschool through third grade with a focus on addressing the development of the whole child, rather than on academic skills in isolation;

- A commitment to common planning time for teachers to meet within and across grade levels and with specialists to discuss, implement and align developmentally appropriate schedules, environments, standards, curriculum and assessments and to share information about children; and
- A plan to hold parent-teacher conferences early in the school year, to discuss any relevant screening results (if the child is newly enrolled), to talk about the family’s goals and concerns, and to get more information about the child, including information to inform the NJKEA.

(b) Coordinates and collaborates with LEAs or other Early Learning Providers, as appropriate, in—

- (i) Providing opportunities for early educators to participate in professional development on early learning and kindergarten standards, assessments, curricula, and culturally and linguistically responsive strategies to help families build protective factors, build parents’ capacity to support their children’s learning and development, and engage parents as decision-makers in their children’s education;

As part of their participation in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan, all participating preschool settings (school district, private provider, Head Start) will have access to the Training Academy. As discussed in Section (C)(1)(f), page 46, a Training Academy Leader will oversee three regional locations, each comprised of three full-time staff (a Training Support Coordinator, an Early Childhood Health Instructor, and a Disabilities Coach/Trainer), and a cadre of per diem trainers with specific content expertise in early learning and kindergarten standards, assessments, curricula, and culturally and linguistically responsive strategies to help families build protective factors. The Academy will provide basic trainings for program directors, teachers, health coordinators, Early Intervention practitioners, home visitors, family child care providers, family workers and parents.

Providing training through the Academy will help to ensure that professional development is of high-quality, and is consistently delivered. DECE EC Specialists will help connect district and provider staff to relevant trainings and GNJK QI Specialists (coaches, CCR&R staff) will provide face-to-face guidance at the program site, ensuring that high-quality practices are supported and reinforced.

In addition to topics covered by Academy, participating programs will be required to enroll in the NJDOE’s Kindergarten Seminar (based on the Kindergarten Implementation

Guidelines) where teachers and administrators will learn how to implement the NJKEA, the Common Core State Standards and the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards using developmentally appropriate practices. Once finished, programs will also be asked to participate in trainings for the New Jersey First through Third Grade Guidelines (see section (F)(2)(d)(ii) on page 118, and Competitive Priority 2, Continuum of Early Learning, page 134).

- (ii) Providing family engagement, support, nutrition, and other Comprehensive Services and coordinating with other community partners to ensure families' access to needed supports;

Successfully engaging parents/families is essential in early learning and development programs. To ensure that the High-Quality State Preschool Program provides culturally and linguistically appropriate family supports, nutrition and other comprehensive and coordinated services, we will partner with the Department of Children and Families (DCF). DCF promotes the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework, and through the CCYCs, will establish new avenues for family engagement and leadership. The local CCYC will allow for the development of services and supports that respond to the diverse needs of New Jersey's many different neighborhoods and communities. In addition, a successful family engagement strategy also means educating parents on important early learning and developmental milestones their child should be meeting; connecting them to needed health care services, screenings, and routine well-child care; and providing them with information about how to access high-quality early learning program settings.

Family engagement and parent leadership development are core features of the High-Quality State Preschool Program (and of other programs, including Head Start, and Evidenced-Based Home Visiting). All of these programs provide outreach to families, educate families about their role as their child's first and most important teacher, provide linkages to other needed services/supports, and work with parents/families to ensure positive transitions for infants/young children—from Home Visiting to center-based child care, from preschool/Head Start to kindergarten, etc.

As also referenced in New Jersey's recent RTT-ELC grant, the following partners support family engagement in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan:

- **State-Funded Preschool:** Family workers, Community Parent Involvement Specialists and district social workers provide direct parent/family outreach and engagement in state-funded preschool programs.
- **NJ Head Start:** HS/EHS programs have been trained in the HS Family Collaboration standards and are core partners in helping to better engage families at the community level.
- **CCR&Rs/Strengthening Families NJ:** DCF-funded partnership between DCF, DHS and CCR&Rs to use the SF Framework with a selection of early learning programs in 21 counties to engage families. About 400 centers have been trained by CCR&Rs.
- **ECACs –State Preschool Program** ECACs include community partners and parents to support the transition of children through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The CPIS evaluates the needs of families, coordinates resources, and connects with the CCYC.
- **NJ Home Visiting Program (NJHV).** NJHV now has three evidence-based Home Visiting (HV) models—*Healthy Families*, *Nurse-Family Partnership*, and *Parents as Teachers*—focuses on families from pregnancy to age three; and one model *Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters* for families of three- and four-year-olds. Child development and school readiness are core benchmarks in the Maternal Infant and early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) federal initiative. As a result of our interagency planning, NJHV is placing a greater emphasis on transition planning from HV to quality preschool programs.
- **Central Intake Hubs:** Central Intake hubs in all 21 counties of the State to improve the physical, behavioral, social-emotional and cognitive development of infants and young children to age 8.
- **Community Health Workers (CHW):** CHWs provide outreach to connect families with needed early learning resources and support.
- **Programs to Support Pregnant/Parenting Teens:** Health and school-based child care services for pregnant/parenting teens and link them to the Central Intake hubs. Services also focus on engaging teen mothers, fathers, and extended family (grandparents).
- **Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN):** SPAN works to strengthen State and local service coordination for families of infants/young children. County-based Family Resource Specialists are parents of children with special needs, and are effective advocates in helping to engage other parents/families of children with special health and educational needs.

- **Family Success Centers:** Family success centers in all 21 counties partner closely with CCYCs to provide information, education, and wraparound service referrals for families along with links to information about insurance; employment; budgeting, nutrition, housing; parent education; parent-child activities; fatherhood support, grandparent support, etc).
- **Shaping NJ / Let's Move! Child Care** – Program reaching children and families in over 200 organizations, including early learning and development programs, to provide guidance on best practices for nutrition, physical activity, screen time limits, breastfeeding support, and family engagement.
- **Learning Resource Center Network (LRC):** State and local CCYCs will have access to the three regional LRCs, which provide information and resources for teachers and families of children with disabilities.
  - (iii) Supporting full inclusion of Eligible Children with disabilities and developmental delays to ensure access to and full participation in the High-Quality Preschool Program;

The inclusion of children with special needs will be a requirement of Subgrantee participation in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan. The High-Quality State Preschool Program now includes 64% of three- and four-year-old children with disabilities in general education classroom settings. For each year that programs implement the High-Quality Preschool Program, the 19 school districts receiving Preschool Expansion grant funds will be asked to increase their inclusion rate by 15%, with a goal of including at least 60% of their preschool children with disabilities by Year 4 of the grant. We will ask the districts to contribute funds from IDEA, 619 Part B, in order to cover the costs of including children with disabilities, which will be reflected in their Four-year Preschool Program Plan and Budget.

Each year we will collect and review information in their annually updated Preschool Program Plans and budgets to track their progress in meeting the targets for inclusion. When a review indicates that targets are not being met, the DECE EC Specialist and our 619 Part B Coordinator will work with special education and early childhood staff from the school district to develop an improvement plan. Progress will be tracked through the program plan, and the SAVS will evaluate the specific practices designed to facilitate the inclusion of children with special needs. For details on how practices around the development and implementation of IEPs will be evaluated through the SAVS, see the SAVS document on Attachment 7 on Appendix page 274.

- (iv) Supporting the inclusion of children who may be in need of additional supports, such as children who are English learners; who reside on "Indian lands" as that term is defined by section 8013(7) of the ESEA; who are migrant; who are "homeless," as defined in subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act; who are in the child welfare system; who reside in rural areas; who are from military families; and other children as identified by the State;

Our High-Quality State Preschool Program has successfully supported a diverse population of children for over 15 years. Many of our programs have dual language programs, and our inclusion rates are high. With our small class sizes, certified teachers, developmentally appropriate curricula and assessments, supports for special populations, systematic professional development and our continuous evaluation and improvement cycle, the program is designed to meet the needs of individual children in all circumstances. The effects of our strong program design are found in the Abbott Preschool Program Longitudinal Effects Study, Fifth Grade findings (Barnett et al., 2013), which showed that preschool participants outperformed non participants (see Section B, Commitment to State Preschool, page 31). The goal of the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan is to bring the successful design of New Jersey's High-Quality State Preschool Program to 19 additional High-Need Communities.

In the High-Quality State Preschool Program, DECE staff support school districts in a variety of ways. EC Specialists provide general support to their assigned school districts, but also work across districts specializing in a specific content area (e.g. health, family engagement, language arts, diversity, inclusion, math, science, and assessment) and its related district position (e.g. coaches, PIRT, supervisors, provider directors, CPIS, social workers). For example, an EC Specialist may work directly with 5-10 districts, while also leading Statewide meetings to provide guidance on inclusion for the PIRT.

School districts hire coaches specifically to support the inclusion of children with special needs, and to ensure that the needs of ELLs are met, in a dual language setting whenever possible. School districts also hire Community Parent Involvement Specialists and social workers who work with private provider family workers to reach families who might need additional supports. The CPIS works in collaboration with the homeless liaison to ensure that homeless children do not fall through the cracks. All programs make children in foster care a priority, and partnerships with Head Start agencies accommodate the needs of migrant families and children in homeless families by reserving slots.

The Training Academy will play a large role in preparing providers and school districts to support the unique needs of each special population. The Academy staff will be tasked with developing training materials that are designed to support each of the target populations, and providing Training of Trainer training for the coaches and administrators who will in turn work with instructional (teachers and teaching assistants) and other program staff.

- (v) Ensuring that High-Quality Preschool Programs have age-appropriate facilities to meet the needs of Eligible Children;

Providers and school districts in the current High-Quality State Preschool Program have worked many years to create facilities that accommodate the needs of preschool children. School districts included preschool facilities in their Long Range Facilities Plans, and received grants from our School Development Authority to build early childhood centers. Community-based preschool providers and Head Start agencies invested in renovations (Head Start used Federal resources), and receive compensation based on fair market value (through appraisals) to support the costs of improving their facilities. The uncertain nature of the Preschool Expansion Grant (funding that is year-to-year) will make it difficult for providers to get loans to improve their facilities. The facilities requirements for providers and schools in the High-Quality State Preschool Program are rigorous (750 square feet of play space, 150 square feet of permanent furniture, a bathroom in the room, and direct access to a preschool-appropriate playground). The Spring 2015 needs assessment will include an assessment of school, provider and Head Start facilities, including the appropriateness of existing facilities. While providers and school districts may not be able to afford significant renovations, they will use Expansion Grant funding to support their facilities costs (i.e. rent), and to make improvements to their sites, including minor remodeling, such as modifying bathrooms and acquiring child-sized furniture to ensure that classroom environments are safe and appropriate for young children.

- (vi) Developing and implementing a systematic procedure for sharing data and other records consistent with Federal and State law; and

Two primary data systems will help us track the impact of our quality improvement efforts— Registry One (our early childhood workforce registry and GNJK database), and NJ SMART (our state longitudinal data system). As GNJK participants, all Subgrantees and contracted providers will register in Registry One where we will collect information about

teachers, program staff, classrooms, community providers and schools. School districts and Head Start sites will be able to upload their current information. Registry One is also where the results of structured classroom observations will be stored as will information about teacher qualifications, program characteristics, the GNJK self-assessment and rating information, professional development, and logs of onsite visits to providers and schools. NJ SMART will also store data about children and programs. A unique Student Identification number will be assigned to each child, and a unique site code will be assigned to each program. In addition, teachers will enter their child performance-based assessment data electronically (TS GOLD®, Child Observation Record, and Work Sampling System), and this information will be uploaded to NJ SMART. Teachers will have access to classroom data, directors and principals to site level data, and program administrators to district-wide data. Any linking and sharing of data will be in strict accordance with the parameters of State and Federal privacy and confidentiality laws.

We will also connect our existing early learning and development data systems by using RTT-ELC funds to create NJ-EASEL, the New Jersey Enterprise Analysis System for Early Learning. NJ-EASEL will serve as a data warehouse that will pull together all data related to infants and young children currently reported by multiple sources and agencies. The goal is to be able to answer critical questions about program and workforce characteristics, and the impact on outcomes for children, and subsequently use the information to evaluate program efficacy, identify underserved populations, and improve outcomes for New Jersey's high-need children. The NJ-EASEL initiative is a joint effort of four state agencies (NJDOE, DHS, DCF, and DOH), led by the NJDOE, and is supported by the New Jersey Office of Information Technology.

(vii) Utilizing community-based learning resources, such as libraries, arts and arts education programs, and family literacy programs.

The private sector has played an important role in spearheading improvements to the quality and effectiveness of New Jersey's Early Learning Programs, workforce, GNJK, and our outreach to the community. We will build on our work with community partners, such as the New Jersey State Library and local libraries to promote stronger parent/child involvement and to support family literacy. Community libraries will be encouraged to use *Every Child Ready to Read* literacy toolkits to promote early literacy development from birth to age five. Libraries will also help parents to access high-quality early learning settings through GNJK, offer on-site

family engagement workshops, and host CCYC meetings, as appropriate (NJ State Library letter of support, Attachment 8 on Appendix page 357).

Evidence for selection criterion (E):

- Any supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers.

**Selection Criterion F. Alignment within a Birth through Third Grade Continuum.**

The extent to which the State has an ambitious and achievable plan to align High-Quality Preschool Programs supported by this grant with programs and systems that serve children from birth through third grade to, among other things, improve transitions for children across this continuum.

To improve transitions across the birth through third grade continuum, our 19 participating High-Need Communities (schools, private providers and Head Start agencies) will be included in our Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) initiatives that are designed to ensure that these children (and families) receive aligned, coordinated and high-quality programs. In addition to adhering to the preschool Administrative Code and Guidance (N.J.A.C. 6A:13A, Attachment 6 on Appendix page 272; Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines, Attachment 5 on Appendix page 221), participating schools and programs in the 19 communities will participate in Grow NJ Kids (GNJK) to ensure that high-quality program components are implemented consistently across settings. Programs serving High-Need infants and toddlers will also be encouraged to participate in GNJK. School district providers and schools will have access to Central Intake hubs for finding hard-to-reach families and for connecting with families from Early Intervention and Home Visiting, as well as foster care families. County Councils for Young Children (CCYC) will provide a valuable resource of family feedback. Programs across all sectors will have access to our Early Learning Training Academy (Training Academy) that will prepare early education and care staff to implement the high-quality components of preschool and infant/toddler programs as defined within GNJK. Through our RTT-ELC grant, school districts will also receive training for kindergarten and first through third grade supports from a team out of Rutgers University. School district staff, providers, and parents will work together to develop Transition Plans, and use data to inform instruction and understand their impact on children’s reading, math and social-emotional skills. Please see our ambitious and achievable plan below for details (see also Competitive Preference Priority 2, Continuum of Early Learning and Development, page 134).

<b>F. Plan for Alignment Within a Birth Through Third Grade Continuum</b>
<b>Goal:</b> New Jersey’s goal is to create a system that ensures smooth transitions for children and their families throughout the birth to third grade continuum and results in increased learning at third grade.

**Outcome goals by the end of the grant:**

1. All providers and schools are connected to Central Intake hubs.
2. All providers and schools are using CCYCs to get feedback on initiatives.
3. Participating programs implement the elements of the High-Quality State Preschool Program and GNJK. Sites serving High-Need children from birth to age three implement GNJK.
4. Each school district has a Transition Plan that includes plans for preschool to third grade transition.
5. Improve the efficacy of kindergarten classrooms by enrolling teachers in the Kindergarten Seminar and the New Jersey Kindergarten Entry Assessment (NJKEA).
6. Family engagement activities are extended in the early elementary years to promote continued parental involvement.
7. Program standards, curricula and assessments are aligned from preschool through third grade.
8. Teachers and administrators implement optimal instructional practices throughout the early grades.

<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
<i>Connect providers(including Head Start) and schools with Central Intake hubs to ensure that families access programs and services</i>		
Community Parent Involvement Specialists (CPISs), social workers and family workers receive training from the Training Academy on connecting with Central Intake hubs	6/2015 to 7/2015	Training Academy, School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
CPISs, social workers and family workers in each community’s preschool program use Central Intake hubs to recruit families	8/2015 to 9/2015	School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
<i>Connect participating school districts (schools, private providers and Head Start) with CCYC</i>		
CPISs join their county CCYC and facilitate communication (e.g. discuss ways to use information generated from GNJK, or brainstorm ideas about recruitment of hard-to-reach families)	1/2016 to 6/2016	CPIS, CCYC
<i>Implement the components of the High-Quality State Preschool Program, including GNJK (for details see also, Section C, Plan for Ensuring Quality, page 39)</i>		
Early Childhood (EC) Specialists help participating programs to make quality improvements based on the continuous evaluation and improvement cycle	9/2015, ongoing	EC Specialists, School District Administrators, Private Provider and Head Start Directors
Non-participating programs serving High Need infants and toddlers in each community are encouraged to participate in GNJK (and associated trainings through the Training Academy)	5/2015 to 7/2015	GNJK Coordinator, Division of Early Childhood (DECE) staff
<i>Implement the NJKEA to measure the impact of preschool programs, and to inform instruction going forward</i>		
Implement NJKEA in all participating school districts	9/2016 to 6/2019	NJKEA Implementation Manager
Conduct NJKEA related Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)	9/2016 to 6/2019	NJKEA Implementation

		Manager, DECE K-3 staff
Conduct NJKEA Kindergarten Seminars for participating districts	9/2016 to 6/2019	NJKEA Implementation Manager, DECE K-3 staff
Integrate NJKEA data into State Longitudinal Data System (NJ SMART)	11/2016	DECE K-3 staff
<i>Establish Transition Teams and preschool to third grade transition subcommittee</i>		
School districts establish Transition Teams (included in the Four-year Preschool Program Plan)	9/2015 to 12/2015	EC Specialist, CPIS, EC Supervisor, Transition Team lead
Preschool to third grade teacher subcommittee discuss curriculum alignment and conduct assessment mapping exercise	1/2016 to 6/2016	DECE staff, CPIS, EC Supervisor, Transition Team
Set up transition portfolios for each child	Begin 9/2015, ongoing	Transition Team lead
<i>Participating school districts participate in the Kindergarten Seminar and receive training on best practices to support math literacy, and social-emotional development at third grade</i>		
Provide training in using data to inform both program evaluation and to scaffold instruction	9/2016 to 8/2017	Rutgers University, DECE K-3 staff
Establish baselines for performance on the NJKEA in the areas of social-emotional development, math and literacy	9/2016 to 12/2016	DECE K-3 staff, School Districts
Establish baselines for performance on a choice of literacy measures (e.g. DRA 2)	9/2016 to 12/2016	DECE K-3 staff, School Districts
Establish baseline of third graders' performance on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) third grade English language arts and math assessments in 2016, and break out by subgroups	6/2016 to 9/2016	DECE K-3 staff, School Districts
Set targets for performance on each measure, and track progress using the schedule of each assessment (e.g. annually, twice yearly)	9/2016	DECE K-3 staff, School Districts
Establish workgroup to identify NJ SMART fields to analyze first through third grade assessment data	7/2016 to 6/2017	DECE K-3 staff
<i>Link Strengthening Families (SF) Protective Factors Framework to NJKEA</i>		
Include the SF Protective Factors Survey at the first meeting with families at the beginning of the school year	7/2016 to 9/2016	Kindergarten teachers
<i>Standards alignment and expansion</i>		
Align New Jersey Birth to Three Early Learning Standards, the revised New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards, Common Core State Standards, and the Head Start and Early Head Start Standards	9/2014 to 1/2015	NJCYC
Add Approaches to Learning to NJ's kindergarten standards	9/2014 to 12/2015	DECE K-3 staff
Add social-emotional development to K-12 Standards	1/2015 to 6/2016	NJ Department of Education (NJDOE)

<i>Prepare teachers and leaders to provide high-quality kindergarten and first through third grade practices</i>		
Begin training focused on four key topics: teacher evaluation, Common Core State Standards implementation in early childhood, the New Jersey First Through Third Grade Guidelines, and using data to evaluate programs and inform instruction	9/2016 to 6/2019	NJDOE, Rutgers University
DECE staff assist school districts to develop and implement transition portfolios and grade level assessments for preschool through third grade to engage and support families and improve transitions	9/2015	DECE P-3 staff, School District P-3 teachers, principals and supervisors

***(1) For birth through age-five programs, these activities include--***

(a) Coordinating with other early education and care programs and child care family service providers supported through Federal, State, and local resources to build a strong continuum of learning for children from birth through age five and their families that expands families’ choices, facilitates or improves their access to programs and supports in their own communities, and engages all families with Eligible Children, including isolated or hard-to-reach families that might not otherwise participate; and

New Jersey’s plan to expand preschool services is bolstered by a well-established foundation of interagency and cross-sector collaboration as referenced in Section B, page 24, and Competitive Preference Priority 2, Continuum of Early Learning and Development, page 134. The initiatives described below will show that New Jersey has created a successful collaboration between early education and care programs and child care family service providers to support a strong continuum of learning for children from birth through age five. These initiatives have already proved effective in expanding families’ choices and connecting with hard-to-reach families in High-Need Communities.

Central Intake

School districts participating in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan (including private providers, Head Start providers and schools) will have access to New Jersey’s relatively new comprehensive early childhood system of care that is anchored by a single point of entry, known as Central Intake. It began as a pilot in three counties in 2008, with a focus on pregnancy and birth. With RTT-ELC funds, the initiative has been expanded to reach a broader early childhood population in all 21 counties.

Central Intake is an important feature of the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan. It provides the framework for seamless referral and coordination among key child and family-

serving partners from pregnancy to age eight. With strong relationships and core funding commitments at the State level (Department of Health (DOH), Department of Children and Families (DCF), Department of Human Services (DHS) and NJDOE), and local cross-sector collaboration, the Central Intake hubs are positioned to ensure easier access for programs and families to a full continuum of early learning and development services and supports within the High-Need Communities included in New Jersey's Preschool Expansion Plan. Partners in this collaboration include New Jersey's High-Quality State Preschool Program, Early Intervention, Preschool Special Education, Evidence-based Home Visiting (HV), Early Head Start/Head Start, child care and family child care, Special Child Health Services, before and after care programs, and New Jersey prenatal clinics and Medicaid managed care organizations.

Referral and linkage through Central Intake is a voluntary process that respects families' choices, and helps to facilitate access to community-based services and supports that are responsive to the eligibility, special needs, and language/cultural and other unique characteristics and preferences of parents/families. Parents or caregivers are able to use Central Intake as a one-stop connection to services that they might need such as a medical home, social services, or High-Quality Preschool Programs. A diagram depicting how services link through Central Intake at the county level is provided in Attachment 40 on Appendix page 742.

New Jersey's long-standing core of community service providers are also poised to help identify and provide services for low-income and/or hard-to-reach families through coordination with Central Intake. County-based Family Success Centers (family resource centers), domestic violence shelters, welfare agencies (TANF, SNAP, NJ FamilyCare) and WIC programs, as well as family workers, social workers and Community Parent Involvement Specialists in the High-Quality State Preschool Program, and community health workers in targeted communities are all now connected to, and through, Central Intake.

#### County Councils for Young Children (CCYC)

This year, with support from the RTT-ELC, New Jersey is adding a new element to our State's continuum of care that facilitates a stronger, better-organized connection with parents and families of young children. Department of Children and Families (DCF) will implement a Statewide network of CCYCs that is based on a pilot in one of our counties. Once the CCYCs are up and running in each county (they should be ready by September 2015), participating programs will have access to an important source of parent feedback on their programs and

initiatives, helping them to better address language, cultural and other unique family needs. The CCYC structure embraces the SF Protective Factors Framework (developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy) and uses parent/community cafes to facilitate parent participation in identifying local successes/needs/concerns, setting priorities and establishing a local structure (committees and workgroups). In New Jersey, DCF and Department of Human Services (DHS) have collaborated in implementing SF within the State network of Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) with both child care centers and family child care providers. The Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework is also used in other prevention settings in DCF and its use is being expanded in child welfare.

Over the next year, this expansion of CCYCs will bring providers and parents together at the local level in all 21 counties. Each CCYC will partner with local providers (e.g. Home Visiting, Head Start, CCR&R, State Preschool Programs, Family Resource Centers, etc.) to identify parents/families to participate on the CCYC. The CCYC will also include other local stakeholders and services (e.g. faith-based organizations, civic groups, libraries, museums, etc.) that support parents and families. Over the next three years, the CCYC will develop the skills of parent leaders and recruit additional parents to participate. Parents will have greater input into the service delivery and coordination at the local level, and become equal partners in improving quality and access to early childhood services. Each county will designate a parent representative to participate in the State's early childhood advisory board, the New Jersey Council for Young Children (NJCYC).

(b) Ensuring that the provision of High-Quality Preschool Programs will not lead to a diminution of other services or increased cost to families for programs serving children from birth through age five; and

All of the current programs and services identified above (Section F(1)(a)) have dedicated sources of funding that align with specific State or federal priorities and/or grants. Because of their direct relationship to identifying and linking children and families to High-Quality Preschool Programs, we will use them as resources to support the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan. Families do not incur a cost for these services, and New Jersey provides an assurance that these supplemental services will not be diminished by the provision of High-Quality Preschool Programs for this initiative.

***(2) For kindergarten through third grade, these activities may include—***

**(a) Ensuring that Eligible Children are well-prepared for kindergarten;**

New Jersey plans to ensure that children are well prepared for kindergarten by implementing the components of the High-Quality State Preschool Program in the schools and providers (including Head Start) in 19 High-Need Communities, and by encouraging sites serving infants and toddlers *before* they get to preschool to participate in GNJK. Programs will be supported by DECE EC Specialists as they set up their programs to meet the standards of the High-Quality State Preschool Program, and will be included in the ongoing evaluation of classrooms and children to inform quality improvements. They will meet the structural elements dictated by the State’s Administrative Code and Guidelines, and will participate in the SAVS and GNJK to ensure that all program features are in place. Programs will also be included in cross-sector initiatives (e.g. training in the SF Protective Factors Framework and Positive Behavior Supports), to ensure that they are prepared to meet the needs of both children and families.

Once Eligible Children get to kindergarten, teachers in the participating school districts will measure their performance with the NJKEA, Teaching Strategies GOLD<sup>®</sup> (TS GOLD<sup>®</sup>), to assess children’s academic and social development as they enter kindergarten, which will assist educators in focusing on whole-child learning. In addition to measuring children’s performance at kindergarten entry, teachers will be encouraged to continue using TS GOLD<sup>®</sup> beyond kindergarten entry to measure progress, guide individualized instruction, and assist in curriculum planning, professional development, and interactions with parents.

TS GOLD<sup>®</sup> is a performance-based assessment system for children from birth through kindergarten that will assist New Jersey kindergarten teachers with individualizing instruction in a manner that is both developmentally appropriate and academically rigorous. Teaching Strategies is in the process of extending the comprehensive tool through third grade, and a number of districts in New Jersey are piloting this tool. The instrument covers all essential domains of school readiness and can be used with any developmentally appropriate curriculum. It is based on 38 research-based objectives that include predictors of school success and that are aligned with New Jersey’s Birth to Three Early Learning Standards, Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards, the Common Core State Standards for kindergarten, and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. TS GOLD<sup>®</sup> helps teachers document

children’s development and learning at particular points in time and over time, use that information to inform instruction, and communicate findings to families and other stakeholders through easily understood reports for various audiences. The tool can be used with all children, including English- and dual-language learners, and children with disabilities. Extensive research conducted by the Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte shows that TS GOLD® is highly valid and reliable (Lambert et al., 2013).

The NJDOE is collaborating with Teaching Strategies to customize TS GOLD® and its implementation to best meet the unique needs of teachers and children throughout our diverse State. A detailed plan has been developed for training kindergarten teachers and other appropriate personnel to use the assessment tool, enter data, assign and access scores, interpret the results, and use that information to inform planning and instruction. New Jersey plans to employ a phased implementation strategy, and use the NJKEA instrument Statewide by 2019 (see Section (C)(3) on page 54).

(b) Sustaining the educational and developmental gains of Eligible Children by—

(i) Promoting collaboration between preschool and kindergarten teachers;

Plans for collaboration between preschool and kindergarten teachers will be described in each district’s Transition Plan, developed annually along with the Four-year Preschool Program Plan. A system for gathering information about children prior to the start of school each year, including the results of performance-based assessments, will be included. Specific strategies will be used by the participating school districts to ensure smooth transitions from preschool to kindergarten. This will help prepare children for new situations and increase the involvement of parents and families in the process (see NJ Preschool Program Implementation Guidelines, Attachment 5 on Appendix page 221). Transition activities specific to the preschool-to-kindergarten transition will include:

- Inviting families to visit children’s future kindergarten building/classroom;
- Distributing home-learning activities, including Summer book lists and other literacy activities for the Summer months prior to kindergarten entry;

- Partnering with the CCYC, Family Success Centers, and local parent-teacher associations to inform parents about how they can be involved in their child’s kindergarten setting and connect new families with families currently enrolled in the school;
- Disseminating information to parents on the transition to kindergarten, including kindergarten registration guidelines, kindergarten options in the community, information on specific schools once placements have been made, and health and nutrition information to ensure that children enter school healthy;
- Offering early registration for kindergarten so that families have time to prepare children for their new setting and teachers can contact their prospective students well before the first day of school;
- Arranging field trips to elementary schools and kindergarten classrooms to increase children's familiarity with the new environment;
- Inviting future teachers to visit children in school and provider sites, and to give parent presentations;
- Asking current preschool teachers to visit the kindergarten classrooms. These visits can promote the sharing of curriculum information, early childhood strategies, philosophies, and special needs of specific children;
- Offering meetings focusing on child and family expectations in the next setting to better prepare children and their families for the opportunities and challenges they will encounter. Parenting, curriculum, school structure, family services and advocacy, and other topics can be covered; and
- Holding workshops that combine both preschool and elementary school teachers to discuss and coordinate curriculum and teaching practices to ensure continuity from preschool through grade three.

In addition, collaboration will be promoted through PLCs. A subcommittee of the Transition Team (made up of preschool through third grade teachers, and district curriculum and assessment staff) will meet to discuss their curricula and assessments. They will complete a map of the assessments currently used in their districts. The map will assist districts in analyzing their child data in preschool and kindergarten, as well as provide the opportunity for meaningful collaboration well beyond. See Figure 2 below for the mapping activity. This will provide a

clear picture for districts of their assessment practices not just in preschool, but in a preschool to third grade context as well. It will highlight holes in assessment practices (e.g. structured observation instruments to measure classroom practices), where too many assessments are implemented, and how the NJKEA data fits as well. In instances where we have used these maps in the past, each district has presented a different picture. Some had too many assessments, some had gaps in certain domains or grade levels, others had too much burden on teachers or administration, and others demonstrated a lack of “using” the data once collected. NJKEA, PLCs, and the assessment map will be used to drive a systematic approach to meaningful collaboration around teaching practices and child outcomes.

**Figure 2. Assessment Map Completed by School Districts**

Grade	Child Assessments	Classroom Assessments	Area(s) Assessed	Why Assessed	When	Who
P						
K						
1						
2						
3						

(ii) Expanding access to Full-Day kindergarten; and

All 19 participating school districts already offer a Full-Day kindergarten program (FDK) to all resident children. There are only 80 (out of 519) school districts in New Jersey that do not offer FDK, and the DECE is starting a campaign to encourage the implementation of FDK in these school districts in October. However, to ensure that children’s kindergarten experiences build upon their High-Quality preschool experiences, teachers will participate in our Kindergarten Seminar and the NJKEA (also see CPP2, Supporting a Continuum of Early Learning and Development, page 141).

(iii) Increasing the percentage of children who are able to read and do math at grade level by the end of third grade; and

Teachers in participating school districts will complete the Kindergarten Seminar (administrators will have an overview), and will also attend professional development focused on using child and classroom data to create a continuous evaluation and improvement cycle in kindergarten through third grade (see Section (e)(ii) above), provided by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), and the Center for Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes at Rutgers University (CEELO). The goal of NIEER and CEELO is to build communities of practice among New Jersey school districts to provide support in their understanding of critical topics and their application to early childhood. Student and classroom data will be used to systematically support children's reading and math skills, to deliver targeted and differentiated interventions when necessary, and will be tracked over time.

NIEER and CEELO will provide the necessary instructional and organizational supports to ensure that students in the participating school districts achieve maximum proficiency in math, literacy, and social-emotional development, during the critical early childhood years from school entry through third grade by helping the NJDOE establish baselines for performance on:

- The NJKEA, in the areas of social-emotional learning, math and literacy. For the lowest-performing subgroups, we will set targets to increase the percentage of students who meet expectations by 5% each year, with an increase of 10% by 2016-17. Data will be collected for kindergarten-third grade.
- A choice of literacy measures (e.g. DRA 2). For the lowest performing subgroups, we will set targets to increase by 10% the number of students at each grade level (kindergarten-third grade) for 2015-16.
- The PARCC third grade literacy and math assessments in 2014-15, and break out by subgroups. For the lowest performing subgroups, we will set targets to increase the percentage of students who meet expectations by 5% over the first year (2015-16 scores), and by 10% over the second year (2016-17 scores). The performance of students participating in the initiatives will be compared to determine if it is greater than that of similar students in other school districts.

(c) Sustaining a high level of parent and family engagement as children move from High-Quality Preschool Programs into the early elementary school years;

New Jersey’s plan to sustain a high level of parent and family engagement as children move from High-Quality Preschool Programs into early elementary school years builds off the work being done in the birth to five continuum. In the 2016-2017 school year, New Jersey plans to have NJKEA teachers use the Protective Factor Survey at the first meeting of the school year as a way for teachers to begin building relationships with family members. This approach will not only serve to align birth to five activities with school-age settings, but will assist teachers in engaging families, as well as better prepare teachers to collect information on young children through the NJKEA process.

(d) Taking steps, or building upon the steps it has taken, to align, at a minimum--

(i) Child learning standards and expectations;

In 2009, we conducted an alignment between our preschool standards and K-3 standards across the domains of visual and performing arts, comprehensive health and physical education, science, social studies and technology, with clear articulation of what children should know and be able to do for each age group (See Attachment 41, on Appendix page 743). We also created new early literacy and math standards to align more closely to the Common Core State Standards for kindergarten (see the alignment on Attachments 42 and 43, Appendix pages 756 and 760). Our team of experts reviewed the standards positively.

Dr. Dorothy Strickland, Professor Emeritus, Distinguished Research Fellow, Rutgers University, who reviewed the early literacy standards alignment, said that, overall, “the document is sound both developmentally and pedagogically. It links well to the Common Core State Standards in place for K-12 learning and teaching” (See Attachment 11, on Appendix page 390). The math review, by Dr. Herbert Ginsberg, Jacob H. Schiff Foundations Professor of Psychology & Education, Columbia University, concluded, “Overall these standards will be an important step forward in New Jersey early childhood education” (See Attachment 13, on Appendix page 417). Lastly, Dr. Marilou Hyson, Affiliate Faculty member in Applied Developmental Psychology at George Mason University, conducted the Approaches to Learning review, concluding that the standards are “clear, simply written, non-overlapping, and easy for teachers and families to understand” (See Attachment 12, on Appendix page 415).

As part of the RTT-ELC grant, we are conducting an alignment of the standards from birth to grade three. This alignment will include the New Jersey Birth to Three Early Learning

Standards, the revised New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards, and the Common Core State Standards. In addition, we plan to add Approaches to Learning to New Jersey's kindergarten standards and incorporate social-emotional development into the K-12 standards.

(ii) Teacher preparation, credentials, and workforce competencies;

To improve the competencies of teachers in kindergarten through third grade, New Jersey will leverage the work of the Kindergarten Seminar (designed to assist educators in the implementation of best practices in the kindergarten year) and training in the forthcoming First through Third Grade Guidelines.

The five-session Kindergarten Seminar will provide teachers and administrators with an introduction to key features of New Jersey's Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines and the NJKEA. The series will include sessions to support teachers in organizing classroom environments and schedules, implementing developmentally appropriate practices, applying effective teaching strategies that support children's development and learning, incorporating the Common Core State Standards, while weaving the NJKEA assessment cycle throughout.

Administrators must register for the series, but are only expected to attend Session One, while kindergarten teachers are expected to attend all five sessions. Kindergarten teachers are required to complete all assigned readings and extension activities. Administrators will receive electronic communications on seminar content and assignments following each session. Participants will receive professional development hours from the NJDOE at the conclusion of the series.

To ensure that the work in birth through age five continues through the early elementary grades, New Jersey is developing First through Third Grade Guidelines that are both developmentally appropriate and academically rigorous. This effort will complete the NJDOE Early Childhood Guidelines series. Teacher and administrators will receive training on the First through Third Grade Guidelines through direct and web-based module trainings developed by NIEER and the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University. Development of and training in the First through Third Grade Guidelines is being funded through our RTT-ELC grant.

Lastly, school districts participating in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan will participate in training from NIEER and CELO (see also Section (2)(b)(iii) above). Their focus

will be on four key topics: teacher evaluation, Common Core State Standards implementation in early childhood, the New Jersey First through Third Grade Guidelines, and using data to evaluate programs and inform instruction. The modules developed for the First through Third Grade Guidelines (see above) will support implementation of best practices in these grades. NIEER and CEELO will provide an opportunity for districts to come together regionally to discuss critical topics guided by literature, expert presentations, district presentations, and facilitated discussions across districts. In year two, a new cohort of districts will be included and, in addition to the group meetings, districts will participate in systematic data collection, responsive coaching, and intentional and facilitated cross-district visits. The focus of the trainings will continue to grow from preschool and kindergarten into the early elementary school years, for a comprehensive and seamless focus from preschool through third grade.

(iii) Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment Systems;

New Jersey plans to address Comprehensive Early Learning Systems by building upon the work started with preschool and kindergarten collaboration and utilizing the assessment map (referenced on page 115) that documents what child assessments teachers are using, in addition to how classroom practices are measured. The intent of the map is to help educators identify the areas that they are assessing (or not assessing), integrate an approach that allows each area to be addressed systematically, and ultimately address all four areas of assessment: classroom environment (e.g. Assessment of Practices in Early Education Classrooms), teacher-child interaction (Classroom Assessment Scoring System, modified Charlotte Danielson), appropriate screening (e.g. DRA) and Performance-Based Assessment (e.g. TS GOLD®).

In addition, as part of RTT-ELC, NIEER and CEELO will be providing training for participating school districts across the preschool to third grade continuum on 1) Transition Planning, 2) Entry Assessments, 3) Progress Monitoring, 4) Classroom Data Reviews, and 5) Data Workshops. Each is a component of a comprehensive assessment and improvement system.

1) *Transition Planning*: Allows teachers and administrators to review data on incoming children as they transition from grade to grade. The SF PFS will be conducted at the first meeting with families at the beginning of the school year, and families will be interviewed about their child's learning and development.

2) *Entry Assessments*: Builds upon the work of the NJKEA and other age-appropriate entry assessments that teachers administer at the beginning of each grade. This provides a starting point for instruction, and forms the basis for individualized learning plans.

3) *Progress Monitoring*: Includes strategies and instruments, such as DRA2, Running Records, and unit assessments. The resulting data provides immediate information on efficacy of instruction and help teachers focus interventions and to develop and refine plans for each child.

4) *Classroom Data Review*: Data reviews will consist of targeted walkthroughs that utilize instruments for appropriate expectations for high-quality instructional practices in early childhood classrooms. The data reviews will assist teachers and administrators in reflecting on their instructional practices by reviewing data every six weeks.

5) *Data Workshops*: Data workshops will occur at the end of every 6-week cycle to provide administrators and coaches with an outside look at data for the purpose of developing targeted interventions.

Lastly, a specified PLC structure will be used to support job-embedded professional development, which will drive the cultural shift required to focus on the high-quality teacher practices that are necessary for any meaningful change within teacher instructional practices and student learning.

(iv) Data systems; and

New Jersey's plan to connect data systems from preschool through third grade will begin with the inclusion of NJKEA data into NJ SMART. As mentioned throughout this grant, our high-quality plan for this selection criterion involves both measuring children's readiness for kindergarten *and* adding to the many ways we measure the effectiveness of various early learning and development programs that interact with children prior to kindergarten entry—both of which will help us close the readiness gap at kindergarten entry.

Our high-quality plan includes improving the training of teachers in the area of reporting data to families, colleagues and administrators. Through training of teachers and administrators participating in the NJKEA initiative, we also will utilize a set of guidelines and checklists to guide the interpretation of the portfolio collections, which will help ensure that teachers are collecting and rating information accurately and reliably.

Upon completion of an assessment period and the assignment of scores, the vendor will upload the scores into NJ SMART. This will allow us to link the kindergarten readiness data to prior early experiences in early learning and development settings, where possible, and to later performance on New Jersey state tests, starting with the third grade PARCC assessments. NJ-EASEL, our early childhood integrated data system, will allow us to match data from our early childhood data systems to assess our programs' efficacy. We will be able to link valuable NJKEA data with early learning and development programs across sectors (e.g., DCF Licensing, NJ SMART, Workforce Registry, Home Visiting, child care, State Preschool, Early Head Start and Head Start, Early Intervention), providing programs with concrete feedback on their efficacy. Furthermore, these data will help districts better prepare early elementary classrooms for entering children. For GNJK, the NJKEA will provide us with insight into whether the levels of the system are correlated with children's performance in kindergarten, and will provide valuable information to programs and early elementary classrooms to make adjustments that will improve the chances for children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

(iv) Family engagement strategies.

New Jersey's plan to connect family engagement strategies throughout preschool to third grade will be built off the work of the Transition Planning activities described above as part of the comprehensive assessment initiative. Transition Planning will help improve all grade level transitions for children across the preschool through third grade continuum. Districts will develop Transition Portfolios, which will help tell the story of a child's learning experience, as well as academic and social development, in relation to grade level standards and goals established by teachers and families. Portfolios will follow students through their grade levels, reach across all learning domains, and contain data from prior years. They will be shared with teachers, families, and preschool providers in order to foster continuous collaboration between community-based preschools and meaningful engagement between schools and families. Once the Transition Portfolios are in place for preschool through third grade, this model system will provide comprehensive collaboration both within and between early learning development programs and elementary schools.

### **Selection Criterion G. Budget and Sustainability.**

The extent to which the budget narrative and budget tables demonstrate that the State will—

*(1) Use the funds from this grant and any matching contributions to serve the number of children described in its ambitious and achievable plan for each year, including using the funds for the projected per child costs for new and improved State Preschool Program slots that are reasonable and sufficient, and that the projected per child costs for new and improved State Preschool Program slots are reasonable and sufficient to ensure High-Quality Preschool Programs;*

New Jersey's school funding formula, the School Funding Reform Act of 2008 (SFRA), established the current funding rates for the State's High-Quality Preschool Program. The per child rates designated within the SFRA are the basis for the rates that will be provided to Subgrantees in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan. We know that these rates are reasonable and sufficient to support all elements of High-Quality Preschool Programs because they were founded after New Jersey's nationally-recognized High-Quality Preschool Program.

From the 2000-01 school year through the 2007-08 school year, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) reviewed and collected detailed line-item budget data for every school district and contracted private provider (including Head Start) participating in the state's High-Quality Preschool Program. Each year, budgets were analyzed for reasonableness and to ensure that budget projections were aligned to each school district's Five-Year Preschool Program Plan, meeting all requirements set forth in State regulations. Using these eight years of data, the NJDOE crafted the preschool component of the SFRA.

The historical data were used to calculate three Statewide average per child rates, each including a portion of costs for district-wide administration of the programs. Over time, the rates established in the SFRA have been increased by the NJ Consumer Price Index, and for SFY15, the base rates are as follows: in-district (\$12,788); community provider (\$14,375); and Head Start (\$7,943). For each county in the State, a geographic cost adjustment is applied to each of the base rates to determine per pupil amounts appropriate for each county.

Knowing that the per child amounts used for New Jersey's High-Quality Preschool Program are reasonable and sufficient to serve Eligible Children in High-Quality slots, we calculated the average per pupil amount within the program. Taking into account all children served in district, provider and Head Start settings across all counties and districts in the program, the average budgeted per pupil amount for FY15 is \$13,320. We used this figure to

estimate the number of new, High-Quality slots we can support with Preschool Expansion Grant funding (see Table A and Table 1 below).

<b>Section (G) Table 1: Average Per Pupil Rate by Grant Year</b>			
	<b>Expansion Grant Funding</b>	<b>New Slots</b>	<b>Per Child Rate</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	\$16,625,000	749	\$22,196
<b>Year 2</b>	\$16,625,000	936	\$17,762
<b>Year 3</b>	\$16,625,000	1,061	\$15,699
<b>Year 4</b>	\$16,625,000	1,248	\$13,321

We know that our High-Quality State Preschool Program needed time and resources to secure and outfit appropriate facilities for preschool children. We also know that, particularly in the early years of the program, intense professional development was needed for teachers, teacher assistants and other staff new to the program. The per pupil rates budgeted for each year of the grant provide additional funding for each district to establish program quality. We estimate that, as fewer new classrooms open each year, the need for these additional funds will decrease proportionally, and eventually stabilize (see also the Budget Narrative below).

As described on Tables A and B, annual matching funds will be used to sustain new High-Quality slots for preschool children in the High-Quality State Preschool Program and other NJDOE-funded preschool programs. Estimated annual matching funds are based on projected increases in State Preschool Education Aid provided to these programs each school year.

***(2) Coordinate the use of existing funds from Federal sources that support early learning and development, such as title I of the ESEA, part C and section 619 of part B of IDEA, subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act, the Head Start Act, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and State, private, local, foundation, or other private funding sources for activities and services that help expand High-Quality Preschool Programs; and***

School districts participating in New Jersey’s High-Quality Preschool Program are well-versed in the coordination of funding from multiple sources to support the learning and development of State-funded preschoolers, and State budget software has been developed to allow districts to track different funding sources within individual programs. The school districts

participating in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan will use existing programs as a model for how to coordinate multiple sources of funding for Eligible Children.

All Subgrantees using Title I funding for preschool programs will follow coordination activities described in the USDOE's non-regulatory guidance document "Serving Preschool Children Through Title I" (see Attachment 44 on Appendix page 767). Each Subgrantee will include in its Title I plan a description of how it will integrate services across Title I, State-funded preschool, grant-funded preschool, child care, and Head Start. In particular, Title I school districts will describe Transition Plans for preschool children entering Kindergarten. Subgrantees will be encouraged to use Title I funding to enhance existing preschool services for Title I eligible children whenever possible. Additionally, Title I, Part C subgrantees must address the use of Migrant Education funds to close gaps in preschool learning experiences and language development for preschool aged migrant students.

Preschool Expansion Grant districts will be required to include children with disabilities in general education classrooms to the maximum extent possible. In order to do this, State Preschool Education Aid (PEA) will be used to support the cost of general education preschoolers (including some Eligible Children), Expansion Grant Funding will be used to support the cost of Eligible Children, and IDEA funding will be used to support the cost of preschoolers with disabilities (including Eligible Children with Disabilities).

Subgrantees receiving Federal funding under subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act will follow all Federal program guidance on the use of funds, school district responsibilities, student enrollment and other requirements (see Attachment 45 on Appendix page 772). For example, programs will be encouraged to reserve appropriate Title I funding and coordinate with other available funding sources to assist homeless preschoolers with referrals for health services; cover transportation costs (not otherwise covered) to transport homeless preschoolers to High-Quality Preschool Programs; and to provide before- and after-school programs for children not already funded for wraparound care.

Many Head Start Grantees already participate in the State's High-Quality Preschool Program as contracted private providers. Annual budget guidance is used to help grantees budget PEA and Federal Head Start funding, estimating the shared costs between the two programs. PEA generally covers the cost of all State requirements above and beyond Federal Head Start requirements (e.g. smaller class sizes and higher teacher compensation), and Head

Start funding generally covers the costs of all Federal requirements over and above State requirements (e.g. oral health care). When requirements are similar, school district and Head Start finance staff work together to determine the appropriate annual share for each funding source. District finance staff then monitor expenditures quarterly to ensure appropriate sharing of costs.

School districts, contracted providers and Head Start programs may serve children eligible for the State's wraparound, or before-and-after care, program. Child Care and Development Block Grant funding supports the cost of the wraparound program for children with families that meet income eligibility requirements consistent with State's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. Families participating in the program use a "swipe card" system to register a child for wraparound each day. Funding is then reimbursed to programs through the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Contracted providers with wraparound programs are required to account for this funding in separate cost centers, and submit quarterly expenditure reports to the district showing how State and Federal funding is tracked separately.

***(3) Sustain the High-Quality Preschool Programs supported by this grant after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Eligible Children with access to High-Quality Preschool Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded, including to additional High-Need Communities.***

New Jersey's commitment to sustaining and increasing funding for High-Quality Preschool Programs is clear. Between FY11 and FY14, the State has increased funding for preschool programs by almost \$35 million (see Table B). In FY15, New Jersey has committed over \$650 million for State-funded preschool, and general education enrollment of three- and four-year-old preschoolers is projected to reach over 53,500. At the end of the grant period, New Jersey will continue to dedicate funding to High-Quality preschool programs, including funding for all of the additional slots that are improved and expanded as a result of the Preschool Expansion Grant.

Each Subgrantee school district will be incorporated into New Jersey's High-Quality Preschool Program and will receive PEA in accordance with the per pupil amounts in the SFRA (see section (G)(1) above). Districts will submit an annual Preschool Program Plan, including projected enrollment by setting: district, community provider, and Head Start. PEA will then be

calculated based on approved enrollment projections and the per pupil amounts established in the SFRA.

After the grant period, all Subgrantees will be required to maintain the High-Quality program standards implemented during the grant period. Existing Early Childhood Specialists from the NJDOE's Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE) will continue to advise districts through regular meetings and site visits. Liaisons will also review each district's annual Preschool Program Plan and budget submission, and guide districts through their annual self-evaluation. Finally, the Subgrantee school districts and their contracted private providers will be included in the annual program quality evaluation already conducted on New Jersey's High-Quality Preschool Program. Along with guidance from the DECE liaison, the annual evaluation will help to inform the need for improvements and professional development so that all Subgrantees maintain the level of quality established during the grant period.

Evidence for selection criterion (G):

- Budget narrative and budget tables included in the Excel Spreadsheets
- Any other supporting evidence the State believes will be helpful to peer reviewers.

**Budget Narrative**

The New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan includes five projects that, when taken together, describe how grant funding will be spent to bring High-Quality Preschool Programs to Eligible Children in High-Need Communities throughout New Jersey. The specific details of each project are described below.

Project 1: Expanding State Infrastructure

No more than 5% of Preschool Expansion Grant funding will be used to support State infrastructure. With grant funding, the NJDOE will hire three Early Childhood (EC) Specialists to accomplish the goals of the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan (see Section (C)(1)(b), page 42). One EC Specialist will act as the Lead and will report to the Director of the NJDOE's DECE and receive an annual salary of \$80,000 plus benefits. The Lead EC Specialist will provide direct technical assistance to Subgrantees, but will also be responsible for overseeing the administration of the grant. The two other EC Specialists will report to the Lead, and will provide direct technical assistance to the majority of the Subgrantees. The EC Specialists will

receive an annual salary of \$70,000 plus benefits. Benefits for these positions are calculated annually at the State’s current rate of 50.75%.

Following the model of the State’s current High-Quality Preschool Program, intensive technical assistance will be provided to Subgrantees during the grant period by the three EC Specialists. After the grant period, Subgrantees will require less intensive technical assistance, and will be folded into the DECE’s existing technical assistance structure. Existing EC Specialists within the DECE will assume the role of advising Subgrantees along with school districts already receiving technical assistance throughout the State.

Operating costs are included based on historical expenditures and are described in the table below. Indirect costs were calculated according to the NJDOE’s current Indirect Cost Rate Agreement of 3.9%.

<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Personnel</b>	3 FTE: 1 EC Specialist Lead (\$80,000 annually); 2 EC Specialists (\$70,000 annually) Year 1 reflects July 2015 start	\$110,000	\$220,000	\$220,000	\$220,000	<b>\$770,000</b>
<b>Fringe Benefits</b>	50.75% of salary	\$55,825	\$111,650	\$111,650	\$111,650	<b>\$390,775</b>
<b>Travel</b>	Travel for 3 EC Specialists (\$.31/mile plus tolls)	\$3,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	<b>\$18,000</b>
<b>Equipment</b>	Computers for RTT-ELC Staff (\$1,200 each for laptop computers)	\$3,600	\$0	\$0	\$0	<b>\$3,600</b>
<b>Supplies</b>	Office Supplies for EC Specialists	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	<b>\$8,000</b>
<b>Other</b>	Annual telephone and Internet (\$2,800 annually per person) Year 1 reflects July 2015 start	\$4,200	\$8,400	\$8,400	\$8,400	<b>\$29,400</b>
<b>Other</b>	Grants Management (0.3% of \$16.6 million distributed to Subgrantees annually)	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	<b>\$200,000</b>
<b>Other</b>	NJDOE Direct Charges (1% of Direct Costs)	\$8,300	\$8,300	\$8,300	\$8,300	<b>\$33,200</b>
<b>Indirect</b>	3.90%	\$11,190	\$17,759	\$16,784	\$16,784	<b>\$62,517</b>
<b>Grantee TA</b>	Mandatory TA Set Aside	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	<b>\$100,000</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$273,115</b>	<b>\$448,109</b>	<b>\$447,134</b>	<b>\$447,134</b>	<b>\$1,615,492</b>

Project 2: Needs Assessment, Program Evaluation and Associated Improvements

Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the NJDOE will work with a State university to conduct a needs assessment and an annual quality evaluation of the New Jersey

Preschool Expansion Plan (see Sections (C)(1)(d) on page 44 and (E)(9) on page 93). The MOU will include a scope of work for a needs assessment to be conducted in each of the High-Need Communities identified in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan. The needs assessment will be conducted in the Spring of 2015, so that the results may be used to inform the start of the school year in the Fall of 2015. The estimated cost for the needs assessment is \$20,000, based on a proration of the cost of a Statewide needs assessment conducted in 2008.

The annual quality evaluation of the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan will begin in the Fall of 2015 with the collection of baseline information. Updates will then be conducted in the Spring of each subsequent grant year (2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019). The NJDOE already conducts a similar study on New Jersey’s High-Quality Preschool Program, and costs of this evaluation were based on that on-going work. In Year 1, the cost is estimated at \$250,000. The chart below shows that the annual cost will increase between Years 1 and 3 as enrollment in the program increases and more observations are required.

The EC Specialist Lead will work with DECE finance staff to complete the MOU process. In procuring this MOU, the NJDOE will follow all required procedures. The budget for this MOU reflects an estimate of proposed costs. Actual costs will vary depending on the specific university procured. Indirect costs were calculated according to the NJDOE’s current Indirect Cost Rate Agreement of 3.9% and based only on the first \$25,000 of the MOU each year.

<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Contractual - Higher Education</b>	MOU with an institution of higher education to conduct needs assessment in 2015 and annual evaluation study in each grant year.	\$450,000	\$275,000	\$325,000	\$325,000	<b>\$1,375,000</b>
<b>Indirect</b>	3.9% up to first \$25,000 of contract	\$975	\$975	\$975	\$975	<b>\$3,900</b>
<b>Project 2 Total</b>		<b>\$450,975</b>	<b>\$275,975</b>	<b>\$325,975</b>	<b>\$325,975</b>	<b>\$1,378,900</b>

Project 3: Teacher and Teacher Assistant Scholarships

Through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS), scholarships will be available for teachers in Subgrantee programs to work towards Preschool through Third Grade certification. Teacher assistants will receive

scholarships to attain an associates’ degree or Child Development Associate (see Section (C)(1)(e), page 45). An infrastructure to provide scholarships to Grow NJ Kids participants is currently in place within DHS, and we will incorporate this scholarship program within that existing system. Scholarship amounts will be awarded based on need, but are estimated at a rate of \$12,000 per teacher. These averages were determined based on discussions with colleges and universities when developing New Jersey’s RTT-ELC grant. The EC Specialist Lead will work with DECE finance staff to manage the MOA process. We estimate that approximately 42 teachers will attain P-3 Certification during the grant period.

Indirect costs were calculated according to the NJDOE’s current Indirect Cost Rate Agreement of 3.9% and based only on the first \$25,000 of the MOA each year.

<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Indirect</b>	3.90% of first \$25,000	\$975	\$975	\$975	\$975	<b>\$1,950</b>
<b>Contractual (MOA with DHS)</b>	Scholarships for Teachers (Est. at \$12,000 for 42 teachers over 2 years)	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$102,000	\$102,000	<b>\$504,000</b>
<b>Project 3 Total</b>		<b>\$150,975</b>	<b>\$150,975</b>	<b>\$102,975</b>	<b>\$102,975</b>	<b>\$505,950</b>

Project 4: Meeting the Standards of High-Quality Programs

For each year of the grant period, the NJDOE will subgrant at least 95% of grant funding to the 19 High-Need Communities participating in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan. We will provide grant funding at a per child level that is commensurate with New Jersey’s existing High-Quality Preschool Program, which currently averages \$13,320 across counties and program settings (district, community provider, and Head Start).

In Grant Years 1-3, each Subgrantee will receive additional grant funding for minor classroom repairs, as well as startup classroom materials, supplies and technology for new classrooms. During these years, Subgrantees will also work with the EC Specialists to identify ways in which grant funding can be used for targeted professional development. The need for grant funding above the per child rate is estimated to decrease proportionally throughout the grant period, as fewer new classrooms are opened, and as professional development needs stabilize. By Grant Year 4, we anticipate that the funding embedded within the State funding formula for professional development, classroom repairs, and classroom materials and supplies

will be sufficient to maintain High-Quality classrooms through the final year of the grant and beyond. See the table below and section (G)(1) on page 122 for more details on annual per child rates.

Budget Category	Description	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
<b>Funds to be Distributed to Subgrantees</b>	Estimated average per child costs: \$22,196 in Year 1; \$17,762 in Year 2; \$15,699 in Year 3; \$13,321 in Year 4	\$16,625,000	\$16,625,000	\$16,625,000	\$16,625,000	\$66,500,000
<b>Project 4 Total</b>		<b>\$16,625,000</b>	<b>\$16,625,000</b>	<b>\$16,625,000</b>	<b>\$16,625,000</b>	<b>\$66,500,000</b>

Project 5: Kindergarten through Third Grade

Existing funds dedicated to State assessments are being used to implement a five-year roll-out of the New Jersey Kindergarten Entry Assessment (NJKEA) (see Section (C)(2)(b) on page 52). New Jersey plans to increase the number of kindergarten children assessed each year, and will include children from Subgrantee school districts in the NJKEA starting in the second year of the grant. NJKEA’s implementation plan also includes training for all kindergarten teachers on the New Jersey Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines (see Attachment 14 on Appendix page 432), and the NJDOE will include all kindergarten teachers within Subgrantee school districts in this training.

New Jersey’s RTT-ELC grant is being used to support the development of and training in First through Third Grade Guidelines (see Section (B)(1), page 21 and Competitive Preference Priority 2, Continuum of Early Learning, page 142). Once the Guidelines are completed, cohorts of teachers will receive in-depth training in the Guidelines. First through third grade teachers in Subgrantee school districts will receive priority for this training. In order to sustain the benefits of new and improved preschool slots supported by the Preschool Expansion Grant, the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan will leverage existing staff and funding to provide supports to kindergarten through third grade teachers and administrators.

### **Competitive Preference Priority 1: Contributing Matching Funds.**

Background: An applicant is not required to contribute non-Federal matching funds to support its ambitious and achievable plan. However, we will give competitive preference to applicants who address this priority and will award more points to applicants that commit to a larger matching contribution. Successful applicants that do not obtain or expend the matching funds they committed to in their applications may be subject to enforcement proceedings, including withholding of funds or denial of a continuation award.

Priority: To receive a competitive preference under this priority, the State must describe and submit appropriate evidence of a credible plan for obtaining and using non-Federal matching funds to support the implementation of its ambitious and achievable plan during the grant period. Matching funds may be comprised of State, local, and philanthropic funds and may also include increased State funding appropriated beginning in the State fiscal year prior to the first year of the grant period. Points will be awarded based on the following scale if the plan is determined to be credible:

Percentage non-Federal match of the State's four-year total award	Competitive preference points
50% or more	10
40-49%	8
30-39%	6
20-29%	4
10-19%	2
0-9%	0

New Jersey is committed to High-Quality Preschool Programs. Since the inception of New Jersey's High-Quality Preschool Program in 1998, the State has increased funding for high-quality programs and served additional high-need children each year. Even during tumultuous economic times, when many states were decreasing their funding for early childhood programs, New Jersey continued to allocate more State funding for preschool. The New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan continues this proud tradition by proposing a 56% match of State funding for High-Quality Preschool Programs (see Table A and Competitive Priority 1 Table).

New Jersey's State Aid for preschool, Preschool Education Aid (PEA), is allocated to individual school districts annually, based on projected enrollment of three- and four-year-old children. Enrollment in New Jersey's High-Quality Preschool Program increased dramatically during the first 10 years of the program, but has since begun to plateau. Enrollment still

increases each year (and is funded accordingly), but at a more tempered rate than in the early years of the program.

<b>Competitive Priority 1 Table</b>						
Types of Match	Increased State Funding in Fiscal Year 2014	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
State Funding	\$14,400,000	\$4,773,000	\$5,773,000	\$6,773,000	\$7,773,000	\$39,492,000
<b>Overall Match</b>	<b>\$14,400,000</b>	<b>\$4,773,000</b>	<b>\$5,773,000</b>	<b>\$6,773,000</b>	<b>\$7,773,000</b>	<b>\$39,492,000</b>

Our preschool budget allocation was given a significant boost in FY14 (an additional \$14.4 million) and another boost in FY 2015 (an additional \$4.7 million), which we will contribute as matching funds. For the remaining grant years, we would use anticipated budget increases as matching funds. These increases are, of course, subject to annual legislative appropriations. In light of the enrollment pattern discussed above, we are projecting what we believe to be a realistic annual match for the State’s High-Quality Preschool Program of \$1 million increase each year.

New Jersey has increased Preschool Education Aid every year for the last five years, as shown in Figure 1 below. Because of this strong history, we feel that a \$1 million annual increase represents a credible matching plan for the Preschool Expansion Grant. Even with this conservative estimate of matching funds for the preschool program, New Jersey is projected to match almost \$39.5 million of requested Preschool Expansion Grant dollars (\$69.9 million) for a match of over 56%. These increases are on top of New Jersey’s already substantial preschool program budget of over \$650 million annually.

<b>Competitive Preference Priority 1</b>		
<b>Figure 1:</b>		
State Fiscal Year	Preschool Education Aid for State-Funded Preschool Programs	Increase from Prior Fiscal Year
<b>2011</b>	\$613,330,000	\$17,200,000

<b>2012</b>	\$619,098,000	\$5,768,000
<b>2013</b>	\$633,670,000	\$14,572,000
<b>2014</b>	\$648,070,000	\$14,400,000
<b>2015</b>	\$652,843,000	\$4,773,000

If appropriated, the anticipated matching funds will be used to support additional slots in the High-Need Communities participating in New Jersey’s High-Quality Preschool Program. Funding will be distributed to individual school districts (and to contracted providers, as appropriate) based on enrollment projections submitted to and approved by the New Jersey Department of Education.

## **Competitive Preference Priority 2: Supporting a Continuum of Early Learning and Development.**

**Background:** The integration of High-Quality Preschool Programs within a broader continuum of comprehensive high-quality supports and services helps to create smooth transitions for children and families to ensure continuous and consistent high-quality early learning opportunities critical to children's success. Transition services play a vital role, particularly in the transitions from infant and toddler services to preschool services, and services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) to services under section 619 of part B of IDEA. States can support children and families through cross-sector partnerships and by leveraging resources from existing State and local agencies that provide early childhood services, including part C and section 619 of part B of IDEA, Early Head Start and Head Start, Home Visiting, child care, preschool programs, family supports (e.g., those that strengthen and stabilize families) and engagement resources, adult education, and housing, health, and mental health services.

**Priority:** To receive a competitive preference under this priority, the State must describe an ambitious and achievable plan that addresses the creation of a more seamless progression of supports and interventions from birth through third grade, such as high-quality infant and toddler care, home visitation, Full-Day kindergarten, and before- and after-care services for, at a minimum, a defined cohort of Eligible Children and their families within each High-Need Community served by each Subgrantee.

Over the past four years, New Jersey has implemented a collaborative partnership approach that spans the birth through third grade continuum and goes across multiple sectors, including the Department of Education (Division of Early Childhood Education (DECE), Offices of Special Education and Title One, including Homeless and Migrant Education), the Department of Human Services (Division of Family Development), the Department of Children and Families (Offices of Licensing, Child Protection and Permanency, and Family and Community Partnerships), and the Department of Health (Office of Early Intervention). For a full description of the programs in each Department, see Section B, Commitment to State Preschool Programs (page 24). Our cross agency collaboration has resulted in a more coordinated delivery of services starting prenatally, and we plan to continue to find ways to ensure continuous and consistent high-quality early learning and development opportunities throughout the prenatal/birth to age eight continuum.

Central Intake hubs and County Councils for Young Children (CCYC) will provide a mechanism to streamline families' access to Comprehensive Services (also see Section F, page 109 - 111), and Transition Teams will be established to ensure continuity throughout the

continuum. Our Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System, Grow NJ Kids (GNJK) will provide common program standards and a way for programs serving infants and toddlers to improve, and the Early Learning Training Academy (Training Academy) will ensure that training is consistent across sectors (Home Visiting, State Preschool Programs, center-based child care, etc.). Developmentally appropriate early childhood practices will be extended up through third grade by training teachers and administrators in the New Jersey Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines and First through Third Grade Guidelines. Each of the participating school districts and providers will join the High-Quality State Preschool Program in participating in these trainings to ensure smooth transitions, sustained optimal experiences and a coordinated service delivery system.

<b>CPP 2. Plan for Supporting a Continuum of Early Learning and Development</b>		
<b>Goal Statement:</b> New Jersey’s goal is to ensure that the early experiences of children are maximized, that transitions are smooth and that the benefits to children are sustained in kindergarten and the early elementary years.		
<b>Outcome goals by the end of the grant:</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All school districts and providers are accessing Central Intake hubs and have representatives on the CCYCs.</li> <li>2. All school districts have a Transition Team in place that includes the essential community members.</li> <li>3. All participating schools and providers (including Head Start) are enrolled in GNJK.</li> <li>4. Other programs in the community serving infants and toddlers are enrolled in GNJK.</li> <li>5. All participating schools and providers are receiving professional development from the Training Academy and are implementing the Strengthening Families (SF) Protective Factors Framework, and have administered the appropriate health and developmental screenings on all children at school entry.</li> <li>6. All teachers and administrators are enrolled in the Kindergarten Seminar and using the Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines.</li> <li>7. All teachers are using Teaching Strategies GOLD® (TS GOLD®), the New Jersey Kindergarten Entry Assessment (NJKEA).</li> <li>8. Teachers are beginning to implement the First through Third Grade Guidelines.</li> </ol>		
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
<i>Central Intake Hubs and CCYCs</i>		
Provide training to Community Parent Involvement Specialists (CPIS), social workers and family workers in participating schools and providers on how to access Central Intake hubs and local CCYCs	7/2015 to 9/2015	Training Academy, School Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
<i>GNJK</i>		
Enroll sites in GNJK	7/2015 to 9/2015	EC Specialists, School

		Districts, Private Providers and Head Start
Identify sites serving High-Need infants and toddlers in the community, and encourage participation in GNJK	Begin in the Fall, 2015 and continue until most sites are participating	GNJK Administrator, Early Childhood (EC) Specialists
<i>Transition Teams</i>		
Transition Teams are established and include representatives from across the continuum	8/2015 to 12/2015	CPIS
<i>Training Academy</i>		
School district schools, providers and Head Start begin receiving year 1 professional development from the Training Academy, based on their initial Self-Assessment Validation System (SAVS), GNJK site-level self-assessment, and external evaluation, including screening for developmental and health concerns	9/2015 to 8/2016	Training Academy
Participating schools and providers receive year 2 professional development from the Training Academy based on their SAVS, GNJK site-level self-assessment, and external evaluation, including SF Protective Factors Framework	9/2016 to 8/2017	Training Academy
<i>Kindergarten</i>		
First half (10) of the expansion school districts enroll in the NJKEA and the Kindergarten Seminar	9/2016 to 8/2017	Teaching Strategies DECE staff
Second half (9) of the expansion districts enroll in the NJKEA and the Kindergarten Seminar	9/2017 to 8/2018	Teaching Strategies DECE staff
<i>First to Third Grade</i>		
First through Third Grade Guidelines and training modules ready for use	9/2016	Rutgers University
First half of participating teachers receive training in the Guidelines	9/2016 to 8/2017	Rutgers University DECE staff
Second half of participating teachers receive training in the Guidelines	9/2017 to 8/2018	Rutgers University DECE staff

### Central Intake

Over the past five years, the State has established a coordinated network of prenatal/early childhood services known as Central Intake to function as a single point of entry at the county level for pregnant/parenting families (see also Section F, page 109). These hubs (currently in 15 counties and being expanded to the 6 remaining counties with funds from RTT-ELC) streamline access to health care resources, social services, Evidence-Based Home Visiting programs and other community supports, from pregnancy to age eight. Participating schools and providers will work with Central Intake (through the Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs)

and CCYCs-also funded by RTT-ELC) to connect families to high-quality early learning and development programs and other services for which they are eligible. They will also use the Central Intake hubs to locate families who are typically hard-to-reach (e.g. migrant and homeless families).

Transition Planning

Each participating school district will identify essential community partners (e.g. parents, preschool providers, Head Start providers, principals, community leaders, Early Intervention staff, school personnel, Family Success Centers, CCR&Rs, Statewide Parent Advocacy Network) in a Transition Plan that will describe how children and families will be supported from preschool through age eight. While the Transition Plan will focus on preschool to grade three, it will also explain how children will be identified from Early Intervention and Home Visiting programs. The following checklist will be used to promote smooth transitions:

<b>Preschool through Third Grade Transition Plan Checklist</b>	
✓	<b>School District Administrator</b>
	Establish a Transition Team composed of families, community agencies and leaders, and preschool and elementary personnel (such as teachers, child study team and Preschool Intervention and Referral Team (PIRT) members, bilingual education specialists, curriculum coordinators, and administrators, Evidence-Based Home Visiting program staff).
	Identify a Transition Team facilitator who will set and conduct regularly scheduled meetings. Provide time for school personnel to attend the meetings.
	Identify children at risk for learning difficulties with a valid screening tool and provide supports targeted to the children’s individual learning needs.
	Select an appropriate instrument for measuring program quality and administer annually to monitor progress.
	Plan systems for data collection, analysis, and accountability to provide information about student progress, program quality, and teacher effectiveness from preschool through third grade.
	Create common planning time for teachers within and across grade levels and with specialists to ensure developmentally appropriate standards, curriculum, and assessments that are aligned horizontally and vertically.
	Consider having teachers loop with a class of children for at least two grade levels.
✓	<b>Transition Team</b>
	Survey families and the community to identify educational and social services needs.
	Include a process for collaborating with families, early learning providers, and local public and private agencies (including those that reach underserved populations) to fully understand children and families prior to school entry.
	Establish goals to ensure seamless supports for all children as they progress through each year, from the Summer prior to preschool through third grade. Focus on addressing development of the whole child rather than academic skills in isolation.
	Provide information to families on the transition to and from each level from preschool through third grade, including registration guidelines, placement options, teacher expectations, and health

	and nutrition information.
	Create transition activities based on the goals created to ensure seamless supports for children and families.
	Generate a timeline for implementing the Transition Plan.
	Revisit and update the Transition Plan annually.
✓	<b>Teachers</b>
	Participate on the Transition Team or provide suggestions for activities.
	Meet with other teachers within and across grade levels and with specialists to discuss and implement developmentally appropriate standards, curriculum, and assessments that are aligned horizontally and vertically.
	Meet with teachers within and across grade levels to discuss transition activities for Spring, Summer, and Fall for children and families.
	Prepare and disseminate developmentally appropriate home learning activities during the school year and the Summer months.
	Get to know each child and family. Contact families prior to the start of school and communicate with them on a regular basis throughout the year.
	Welcome new children and families, let families know how they can be involved in their school and classroom.

Grow NJ Kids (GNJK)

All participating provider and school sites will enroll in GNJK. GNJK program standards are a culmination of each agency’s evidence-based practices, from the High-Quality State Preschool Program’s requirement for comprehensive curricula, and appropriate use of screening and performance-based assessments, to Head Start’s Parent, Family, and Community engagement framework, and to the Department of Health’s recommendations for health screenings. Each agency’s contributions have resulted in a roadmap to high-quality practices for centers and schools (a Family Child Care instrument is under development). Our system is being implemented across sectors – child care, Head Start, Early Head Start, the High-Quality State Preschool Program, schools serving preschool children with disabilities – effectively raising the bar for quality of care for infants and young children from birth to age five, using a consistent, cross-agency approach. By the end of the RTT-ELC grant period (December, 2017), 80% of the High-Quality State Preschool Programs will be participating in GNJK, including the programs incorporated in New Jersey’s Preschool Expansion Plan. The community needs assessment (see Section (C)(1)(d), page 44) will identify sites serving High-Need infants and toddlers, and these will be targeted for participation in GNJK.

## Training Academy

Participating sites in each community will have access to a statewide Training Academy (funded through RTT-ELC) that will have three regional locations, including one in Southern New Jersey (Atlantic-Cape Community College, see Letter of Support, Attachment 51) where the majority of the Subgrantee school districts are clustered. Our High-Quality Plan includes a strong emphasis on core training to ensure that early childhood educators understand and address essential health, behavioral and developmental domains included in the health standards. In addition to having access to a district nurse, programs will have access to a full-time Health Coordinator (with a nursing or health education background). The regional Health Coordinators will provide core training modules that cover key domains of health, safety, and social, emotional and cognitive development discussed above, as well as modules that address specialized training support for staff to help special needs children, English language learners, migrant families, and homeless populations. Health trainings also will include hands-on skills building for developmental milestones, routine developmental screening (Ages & Stages Questionnaires® (ASQ), ASQ: Social-Emotional, Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-R)), hearing and vision screening, parent/caregiver-child interaction, etc.

The participating sites will receive training on the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework from the Training Academy. New Jersey's Training Academy will provide two core training strategies to ensure widespread access: 1) online SF Protective Factors Framework curriculum offered by the National Alliance of Children's Trust & Prevention Funds for early childhood educators (both center-based and family child care) and 2) face-to-face, "train the trainer" SF Protective Factors workshops facilitated by nationally respected trainers to build in-state capacity. This "train the trainer" strategy will then allow New Jersey to expand in-person training to front line workers in a range of early learning and development settings. By Year 2, New Jersey will be fully equipped to ensure the integration of the SF Protective Factors Framework into the early childhood training menu.

New Jersey's High-Quality Plan for this section also ensures that family outreach professionals working in other settings that interact with young children and their families have equally easy access to quality training and ongoing support through the Training Academy. Therefore, family engagement trainings will be open to staff in related settings in each target community – Community Health Workers, Special Child Health Services, Early Intervention

(Part C), Special Education (Part B), Family Success Centers, Child Welfare, Foster Care, and others – where health and supportive services are provided to parents/families of infants and young children.

#### Improving the Quality of Infant Toddler Settings

Programs serving High-Need infants and young children, such as our center-based sites outside of the High-Quality State Preschool Program, have had limited opportunities for support. We have a wide gap in quality between the programs, as evidenced in a recent study that examined the quality of (non State-Preschool) center-based programs serving infants and toddlers (See Attachment 46, The State of Infant-Toddler Care and Education in New Jersey, on Appendix page 774). The study found that “the quality of center-based infant and toddler care in the State of New Jersey is primarily of moderate quality, with the vast majority less than good.” To address this issue, we will encourage the centers serving High-Need infants and toddlers in each community to participate in GNJK where they will have access to professional development through the Training Academy, and embedded professional development that will provide onsite support and coaching. Quality Improvement Specialists will be assigned to assist in implementing the components of the High-Quality program, helping to improve the earliest experiences for children. Because of the low baseline of many of the programs that will be entering GNJK, we will use the RTT-ELC grant opportunity to construct a support structure that helps programs move from providing basic care to creating programs that result in learning and development benefits for infants and young children. We have carefully considered where the programs are starting out, and have set realistic targets for quality improvement. We believe that by the end of the grant period, we will have established the infrastructure for quality improvements, and begun to close the quality gap we see within our state.

#### Improving the Quality of Kindergarten Classrooms

All 19 school districts included in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan have Full-Day kindergarten. However, teachers in these Full-Day programs are not necessarily prepared to foster children’s development and learning, limiting the potential impact of the 6-hour day. In recent years, there has been a push for kindergartners to acquire skills formerly reserved for later grades. Some trends, including teaching skills in isolation and eliminating opportunities for children to engage in “choice” activities, are not in keeping with the best ways young children learn – through ample opportunities to explore, practice, apply, and extend on the concepts

presented in the classroom. Concerns about the quality of the kindergarten experience were confirmed in a 2009 study of the quality of New Jersey kindergarten classrooms (NJ Kindergarten Evaluation Study, Attachment 49, on Appendix page 779) that showed that children's experiences were less than optimal:

- Hands on materials were not used in more than half of the classrooms
- Children did not converse with their peers in most classrooms
- Teachers did not have informal conversations with children in most classrooms
- Most frequent forms of instruction were whole group and worksheets
- Limited opportunities for daily gross motor activity
- Limited opportunities for child choice
- Limited attention to issues of diversity
- Little evidence of scaffolded instruction and differentiation
- Limited use of children's literature

In response to the foregoing findings, and to help teachers (and administrators) create high-quality kindergarten experiences; we developed the New Jersey Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines. The New Jersey Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines were an essential step in building continuity from preschool to grade three, and in response to school districts' many questions about developmentally appropriate kindergarten practices in the twenty-first century. The New Jersey Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines reflect the work of early childhood professionals across the State to bring current research and best practices together in one usable document for school administrators, teachers, teacher educators, and families.

The New Jersey Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines are divided into three sections. Section One, Guiding High-Quality Practice in Kindergarten, provides background in developmentally appropriate practice for working with five- and six-year-old children; Section Two, School Structures that Support High-Quality Kindergarten, describes a comprehensive framework for optimal program delivery; and Section Three, High-Quality Kindergarten in Action, details what a kindergarten classroom should look like and what should be happening in that environment on a daily basis throughout the kindergarten school year (see the outline of the New Jersey Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines Outline, on Attachment 47, Appendix page 777).

To ensure that the benefits of the high-quality preschool program continue beyond preschool, all kindergarten teachers (and administrators) in the participating school districts will be asked to use the New Jersey Kindergarten Implementation Guidelines. The kindergarten teachers will be enrolled in a DECE five-session training series focused on using both the Guidelines and the NJKEA (see also K Seminar syllabus, Attachment 48, on Appendix page 778; and Section (F)(2)(b)(iii) on page 116).

#### Improving the Quality of First Through Third Grade Classrooms

To help schools navigate the increasingly complex world of Common Core and higher expectations for accountability, and to promote smooth transitions across the grade levels, we will next develop guidelines for grades one to three (a draft will be ready October 2014, see the outline for the document, Attachment 16, Appendix page 535). Funded through our RTT-ELC grant, the guidelines will include information on pedagogy and young children, best practices in assessment, reading interventions, center- and project-based learning, in addition to specific guidance on implementing and assessing the Common Core using developmentally appropriate instructional practices and will highlight strategies for teacher evaluation. The Graduate School of Education and the National Institute for Early Education Research (both at Rutgers University) will draft the document and work with school districts to test it, as well as work with a Guidelines Steering Committee (comprised of school district staff, early childhood experts, higher education and staff from relevant state agencies). Like our preschool and kindergarten guidelines, the First through Third Grade Guidelines will come with modules to support their implementation. Once the guidelines are available, training will be delivered through both in-person and web based-training to all of the districts participating in the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan.

### **Competitive Preference Priority 3: Creating New High-Quality State Preschool Program Slots.**

Background: Many States have taken note of the short- and long-term benefits of early education and have launched efforts to expand the availability of State Preschool Programs. As of 2013, 40 States and the District of Columbia have at least one State Preschool Program in place.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, only about 28 percent of America's four-year-olds were enrolled in a State Preschool Program in the 2012-2013 school year.<sup>2</sup> The high costs of private preschool programs and the lack of State Preschool Programs narrow options for families, and especially so for low-income families. In 2011, four-year-olds under 200 percent of poverty were 16 percentage-points less likely than their higher-income peers (above 200 percent) to attend any preschool program, whether public or private.<sup>3</sup>

Priority: To receive a competitive preference under this priority, the State must demonstrate how it will use at least 50 percent of its Federal grant award to create new State Preschool Program slots that will increase the overall number of new slots in State Preschool Programs that meet the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

New Jersey is taking a bold approach to the Preschool Expansion Grant. Not only will we use 95% of our grant award to increase new slots in the High-Quality State Preschool Program (see Table A and Table 1 below), we will also use \$10.8 million in existing state funding to improve the quality of existing slots currently serving four-year-olds. The goal of our plan is to maximize our resources and use State and federal funding together to reach a higher percentage of our High-Need population of four-year-olds, in classrooms meeting all elements of High-Quality Preschool Programs.

Within our Subgrantee school districts, 32.6% of four-year-olds are currently served in preschool programs, and we know these programs do not currently meet all standards of High-Quality Preschool Programs. During the grant period, we will use the State funding already provided to these programs to convert as many slots as possible to High-Quality Preschool Program slots. Using the current average per pupil rate for the State's High-Quality Preschool Program as a guide, we estimate that Subgrantees will be able to use their existing State preschool funding to convert almost 1,067 of their current 1,694 slots to High-Quality slots (see

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1Based on current data from: Barnett, W.S., Carolan, M.E, Squires, J.H., and Clarke-Brown, K. (May 2014). State of Preschool 2013: First Look (NCES 2014-078). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.

2 Ibid.

3 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ASPE tabulations from the Current Population Survey, available at: [http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/14/EarlyCareEducation/rb\\_ece.cfm#\\_Toc373832432](http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/14/EarlyCareEducation/rb_ece.cfm#_Toc373832432)

Table 1 below). These slots will be available to both Eligible Children and other resident children in these communities.

<b>CP3 Table 1: High-Quality Preschool Program Slots (Totals by Grant Year)</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>New High-Quality Slots (Grant-Funded)</b>	<b>Improved High-Quality Slots (State-Funded)</b>	<b>Total High-Quality Slots</b>
<b>Pre Grant Year Total Slots = 1,315</b>	0	0	0
<b>Grant Year 1</b>	749	640	1,389
<b>Grant Year 2</b>	936	800	1,736
<b>Grant Year 3</b>	1,061	907	1,968
<b>Grant Year 4</b>	1,248	1,067	<b>2,315</b>

We will then provide at least 95% of annual grant funding to Subgrantees to open new, High-Quality slots for Eligible Children (see Table A). Again, using the state’s High-Quality Preschool Program as a guide, we estimate that by the end of the grant period, Subgrantees will offer a total of 1,248 additional, High-Quality Preschool Program slots to Eligible Children (see Table 1 above).

Our model allows us to maximize the amount of grant funding available for new slots (95%). Coupled together, grant and State funding will provide for approximately 2,315 High-Quality Preschool Program slots, which equates to a 36.7% increase in slots. We estimate that almost 59% of Eligible Children and almost 45% of all four-year-olds will be served in these High-Need Communities. As part of the New Jersey Preschool Expansion Plan, all slots, improved and new, will meet all elements of High-Quality Preschool Programs, as described throughout Section C.

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