



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

November 28, 2016

Nicol Russell  
Arizona Department of Education  
1535 W. Jefferson Street, Bin #15  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007-3209

Dear Nicol Russell

On August 1st-3rd, 2016, a team from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) the Department conducted an onsite monitoring of Arizona's implementation of its approved Preschool Development Grant (PDG)-Development. This monitoring aims to continue the collaborative relationship that began at the grant award and development of the scope of work. It provides the Department with a deeper understanding of each State's overall performance; the successes, challenges, and strategies for the implementation of its Preschool State Plan; and the fiscal management of the grant funds. It also helps us tailor technical assistance to each State's specific needs.

The site visit included presentations and discussions related to all projects in the approved scope of work, including grant management, implementation of high-quality programs (both new programs and improved existing programs), early learning standards, comprehensive services, workforce development, and sustainability. During the visit, ED project officers visited the Arizona Department of Education and preschool classrooms located in each of the following communities: Paloma and Fowler School Districts.

Enclosed is a summary report based upon this review. The report includes highlights of Arizona implementation of PDG and a snapshot of Arizona's progress under each PDG key areas. This report will be posted on the PDG website. The report includes "next steps" to ensure that Arizona implements PDG consistent with its approved application, scope of work, and timelines identified in its project plans.

We want to thank you and your staff for your cooperation and hospitality during the site visit, and for your efforts in providing high-quality preschool opportunities through the Preschool Development Grant. We have discussed and as detailed further in this report, Arizona is receiving a corrective action report as a result of the visit. As such, a written response to the corrective action is expected by January 5, 2017. We hope you will continue to communicate any needs or concerns to your ED project officer (s).

We look forward to continuing our work with you and supporting Arizona's technical assistance needs to ensure successful implementation of PDG. Thank you for your commitment to Arizona's youngest children.

Sincerely,

Libby Doggett,  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Early Learning  
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education  
U.S. Department of Education

Enclosures

### PDG Site Visit Report

<b>Monitoring Information</b>	
<b>State Lead Agency</b>	Arizona Department of Education
<b>State Participating Agency(s)</b>	Arizona Department of Education
<b>Grant Period</b>	January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2019
<b>Current Year of Grant</b>	January 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016
<b>PDG Monitoring Period</b>	May 2016 – September 30, 2016
<b>PDG Monitoring Activity (Desk or Onsite)</b>	Onsite
<b>Monitoring Review Date(s)</b>	August 1, 2016 – August 3, 2016
<b>State Participants/Project Leads</b>	Terry Doolan Nicol Russell Juliana Panqueva Alma Quintana
<b>U.S. Department of Education Project Officer(s)</b>	Tammy Proctor Steven Hicks

#### ***Overview of PDG Monitoring***

The Department of Education (the Department) is committed to supporting States as they implement the expansion of new and improved high quality preschool for eligible children through their PDG grant. Consistent with this commitment, the Department has designed a monitoring process to assess a State's implementation of the program requirements and its approved Scope of Work for PDG and the State-level systems and processes needed to support implementation.

During the recent onsite monitoring, Arizona's implementation of PDG was reviewed across several key areas: Capacity Building and Increasing Slots, Sub recipient Monitoring, Birth to Third Grade Continuum, and Budget and Sustainability and Fiscal Accountability. These represent the core priorities for implementation as outlined in the PDG Monitoring Tool. In each area, the Department identified key elements that are required under PDG and are likely to increase the access to and quality of State Preschool programs and lead to increased high quality opportunities for young children and their families.

Arizona was identified for a site visit based on the following factors:

- Arizona is a PDG Development State and the Department is conducting onsite visits of all PDG Development grantees;
- Arizona has experienced challenges implementing new full-day high quality preschool programs.

The report contains the following sections:

- **Summary of Visit.** This section describes, in brief, the topics covered, the lead agency and sub recipients visited, as well as personnel participation in any meetings or activities.
- **Highlights of the State's Implementation.** This section identifies key accomplishments in the State's implementation of PDG as identified during the site visit.
- **Status of Implementation of PDG.** This section indicates the State's implementation progress based on the monitoring and information collected.
- **Elements Requiring Next Steps.** This section identifies any elements for which the State is not on target for meeting its timelines outlined in the approved scope of work and includes next steps that the State must take to meet the grant outcomes, as identified during the monitoring.
- **Recommendations to Strengthen Implementation.** This section provides recommendations to support the State in continuing to meet the goals and timelines of its PDG grant, as identified during the monitoring.
- **Additional Comment.** As appropriate, this section includes any additional information related to the State's implementation of PDG not included elsewhere.

### ***Summary of Visit***

The PDG monitoring visit for Arizona was conducted during the week of August 1-3, 2016. During the first day of the visit, ED project officers discussed a variety of PDG implementation topics with the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) including the State's fiscal accountability procedures, monitoring protocol (ECQUIP), outreach activities, birth to third grade continuum, recruitment of teachers with bachelor's degrees, the State's capacity to create new high-quality preschool slots, and other topics that impact the implementation of the grant.

The second day of the visit, ED and ADE officials traveled to Paloma School District to visit one classroom serving 20 students in a rural community. During the visit, ED and ADE officials met with the principal of the elementary school and discussed the district's successes, challenges and goals for increasing and sustaining preschool in Paloma. In addition, ED and ADE traveled to the Fowler School District where several improved slots in Head Start classrooms were observed. During the visit, ED and ADE officials met with the Superintendent, one principal, and the preschool coordinator and conducted classroom visits. On the third day of the visit, ED and ADE officials met to discuss the overall visit. ADE staff addressed questions and provided clarifications regarding the State's Preschool Program. ED staff provided a preliminary assessment of the visit to include next steps in the monitoring process, highlights of the State's work, implementation concerns and preliminary suggestions for improvement.

### ***Highlights of the State's PDG Implementation***

- ADE has used its funds to support the integration of preschool data gathered through Teaching Strategies GOLD into the Arizona Department of Education's State Longitudinal Data System, AZ Dash. This effort will enable the High Need Communities to identify achievement gaps, pinpoint initiatives that best promote positive outcomes, and complete a longitudinal analysis of data. ADE's ultimate goal is to develop a secure, interoperable data network; identify and obtain the necessary permissions to access, store, and disseminate data and related findings to stakeholders; and establish pathways for data sharing and exchange. In year 1 of the grant, the

first phase of this work was completed with the transfer of archived Teaching Strategies GOLD data for approximately 85,000 students into the AZ Dash data system.

- Arizona used its early learning “*Program Guidelines for High-quality Early Education: Birth through Kindergarten*” (PGHQ) document to identify and outline the elements of high-quality preschool programs. To ensure that each early learning provider in PDG High Needs Communities (HNC) was properly equipped with knowledge of the PGHQ, ADE made available in-person professional development on the PGHQ, and hosted and recorded a webinar on the introduction to the PGHQ document. The recorded webinar was then made available to all PDG participants. Additionally, all sub-grantees were required to participate in ADE's Early Childhood Quality Improvement Practices (ECQUIP) process to ensure community collaboration on the implementation of high-quality preschool programming is taking place. ADE also used the process as a way for the sub-grantees to link with the local education agency in their high need communities.

***Status of Implementation of PDG***

In the onsite monitoring the Department used a monitoring and accountability rubric to help determine progress of the State’s implementation. The rubric includes three implementation status levels:

- **Level 1 – *Developing***: the State is in the process of developing this activity, or the activity is very new. The State may be facing challenges in implementation, roll-out, or communications with sub recipients and other stakeholders.
- **Level 2 – *Implementing***: the State has developed and implemented the activity, although the activity might still benefit from adjustments, training, or communications with sub recipients and other stakeholders.
- **Level 3 – *Sustaining & Continuing Improvement***: the activity is well-established in the State, and may be undergoing a process of evaluation or program improvement. Sub recipients, stakeholders and users have been trained and/or communications strategies have been established.

Element	Status
<b>Capacity Building and Increasing Slots</b>	
The State public awareness and recruitment activities are targeted towards eligible 4 years old children in high need communities and families 200 percent below poverty.	Implementing
The State’s expansion efforts are targeted towards increasing the access to high-quality preschool programs for 4 year olds.	Implementing
The State has a plan to ensure that existing State Preschool slots met the twelve standards of a High Quality Preschool Program under the PDG funding.	Developing
<b>Sub recipient Monitoring</b>	
The State Lead Agency has a process to monitor grant and sub-recipients activities to ensure implementation of the goals and performance measures outlined in the approved PDG State Plan.	Implementing
The State is on schedule with its monitoring of sub recipients to ensure that all of the high quality	Developing

standards for Preschool are met within PDG funded preschool classrooms.	
The State is providing access comprehensive services to all children enrolled in the PDG funded preschool classrooms.	Implementing
<b>Birth to Third Grade Continuum</b>	
The State has aligned the PDG funded program within the Birth to Third Grade Continuum of early learning standards and activities that help prepare children for kindergarten thru third grade.	Implementing
The State is implementing a data collection system for tracking student outcomes from prekindergarten to kindergarten entry through third grade.	Implementing
The State is implementing a transition protocol to ensure that children transitioning from early care and education environments to kindergarten to third grade settings receive the supports necessary for a smooth transition.	Implementing
<b>Budget and Sustainability</b>	
The State has policies and procedures to track the State and Sub recipient budget activities to ensure that funds are expended according to State, Local and Federal procurement laws.	Implementing
The State has in place a system to track the "use of funds" under the PDG grant.	Implementing
The State has a plan to ensure that High Quality State Preschool Programs will remain of high quality after federal funds are no longer available.	Developing
<b>Fiscal Accountability</b>	
The State has policies and procedures in place to ensure the grant funds are expended according to the federal laws outlined in the federal Super Circular and EDGAR.	Implementing
The State has a system in place to ensure that its Sub recipients are meeting the federal laws of the Super Circular comply with the "supplement not supplant" requirements.	Implementing

***Recommendations to Strengthen Implementation:***

- ADE has not ensured that it can staff its PDG classrooms with at least one teacher with a bachelor's degree. The State should explore its options for collaborating with institutions of higher learning across the State to build partnerships to identify potential graduates in education and establish a teacher recruitment and incentive plan. This will allow ADE to develop a registry of BA teachers to support the State Preschool Program.
- ADE should explore their options for identifying additional high needs communities that have the capability to expand preschool opportunities to students and who can meet the State's and the PDG grant requirements for a high-quality preschool program in their communities. This will

create options for Arizona to increase access to high-quality preschool programs and serve more children.

***Elements Requiring Next Steps:***

Through its onsite monitoring, annual performance reporting and continuous monthly calls over the past months, the Department has noted its concern about ADE's implementation of its PDG grant. The areas of concern are: State capacity to increase the number of high-quality preschool slots; and the capacity to ensure that PDG classrooms are staffed by at least one teacher with a bachelor's degree. As a result of its program review and ongoing monthly calls, the Department is imposing a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) targeted on the following areas:

1. ADE must ensure that every PDG-funded preschool classroom has at least one teacher with a bachelor's degree. Specifically, ADE has been unable to staff all of the preschool classrooms with at least one teacher with a bachelor's degree. We note that the State is challenged with a significant teacher shortage and as a result, the State has changed some teacher certification rules. In 2016, the passage of SB 1208 changed the requirement for teaching interns to allow individuals with Teaching Intern certificates – and who had not yet obtained bachelor's degrees – to teach in the State's public schools, subject to agreements between the educator preparation program provider, the provider's partner organization, and the local education agency. Despite these challenges, Arizona understands the importance of having teachers with high staff qualifications in its preschool classrooms. The Department looks forward to the progress that Arizona will make staffing PDG classrooms with teachers with bachelor's degrees.
2. ADE must ensure that it meets or exceeds its currently approved targets for serving eligible children in high-quality preschool programs in years 2, 3 and 4 of the grant. Because there was not a teacher with a bachelor's degree in all PDG classrooms in year 1, the State did not meet its targets for year 1 of their grant. The Department looks forward to ADE moving forward with strategies to ensure an increase in the number of children served in preschool programs that meet all of the elements of high quality, including that they are staffed by at least one teacher with a bachelor's degree.

***Additional Comments:***

ADE must submit a comprehensive plan to address the issues identified in the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) within 30 days of receiving the Corrective Action Plan and monitoring report.

## **Corrective Action Plan (CAP) Template**

This Corrective Action Plan (CAP) template is a tool to help staff address the grant requirements in the PDG grant while working together to create meaningful, practical, and supportive CAPs. It uses the steps and tracking below.

### **Step I. Areas Identified for Improvement *(examples)***

- **BA Degree Teachers**
- **Full Day Preschool Program**
- **Comparable Teacher Salary**

### **Step II. Goals and Professional Responsibilities**

- **Goals and responsibilities to be developed for each area of deficiency**
- **Team has 30 days to submit CAP**

### **Step III. CAP Progress Summary**

- **Request a quarterly report in writing on the progress of the CAP with sub reports on targeted tasks monthly in advance of each monthly call with Program Officer**

### ***Interim Review of CAP Progress***

- ***6 month review by Project Officer from date of signed CAP***

### ***Summative Review of CAP Progress***

- ***12 month review by Project Officer from date of signed CAP***

## Corrective Action Plan (CAP) Template

<b>State Name:</b>	<b>State Agency on Grant:</b>	<b>Date</b>
Arizona	Arizona Department of Education	11-2-2016
<b>Project Officer Name :</b>	<b>Date of Monitoring Visit:</b>	<b>Plan Begin/End Dates</b>
Tammy Proctor/Mary Moran	August 1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2016	

### I. Areas Identified for Improvement

No.	Areas Identified for Improvement	Sources of Information/Evidence	Corresponding Component (if applicable)
1	Building Capacity and Slots	A plan describing how the State will meet or exceed its currently approved targets for serving eligible children in high-quality preschool programs that meet all of the elements of high quality, including that they are staffed by at least one teacher with a bachelor's degree, in years 2-4 of the grant	
2	Teacher Qualifications	Evidence that in year 2, PDG classrooms were staffed by at least one teacher with a bachelor's degree (e.g., an assurance from each subgrantee regarding each of their PDG classrooms; evidence of communication with each subgrantee regarding teachers with bachelor's degrees). As needed, State will provide comparable evidence for years 3 and 4.	

### II. Goals and Professional Responsibilities

Area No.	Demonstrable Goals	Staff Member Responsibilities	Supervisor Responsibilities	Completion Date	Estimated Hours
1					

2				
3				

Area No.	Demonstrable Goals	Staff Member Responsibilities	Supervisor Responsibilities	Completion Date	Estimated Hours
4					
5					

*My signature below indicates that the leadership team and I have received a copy of this Corrective Action Plan and that I understand and contributed to its contents.*

Lead Agency Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership Team Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership Team Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership Team Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

III. CAP Progress Summary

*Interim Review of CAP Progress*

Area No.	Demonstrated Progress	Sources of Evidence	CAP Revisions (if applicable)	Review Date
1				
2				
3				

*My signature below indicates that the leadership team and I have reviewed the information recorded in the Interim Review of CAP Progress and that I understand its contents:*

Lead Agency Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership Team Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership Team Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership Team Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Summative Review of CAP Progress**

Area No	Demonstrable Goals	Expectations Met (Y) or Not Met (N)	Sources of Evidence	Review Date
1				
2				
3				

*My signature below indicates that the leadership team and I have reviewed the information recorded in the Summative Review of CAP Progress and that I understand its contents:*

**Lead Agency Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Leadership Team Member Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Leadership Team Member Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Leadership Team Member Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_