

# PRESCHOOL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS 2016 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

## Tennessee







# U.S. Department of Education PDG Annual Performance Report Executive Summary

Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Grantee State:     TN    

PR/Award #:     S419B150026    

You are required to submit an Executive Summary of up to 3000 words with your Annual Performance Report. This summary should relate to your approved application and summarize the goals and objectives that have been achieved under your grant, what you learned, and any evaluation results. Describe any unanticipated outcomes or benefits from your project and any barriers that you may have encountered. If there have been any changes to the project from the approved application, those should be explained as well.

## **Overview of Progress:**

In 2016, Tennessee's federal Preschool Development Grant-Expansion (PDG-E) funds have supported local educational agencies in Memphis/Shelby County and Nashville/Davidson County in the expansion and improvement of pre-K programs and services. In Nashville/Davidson County 240 new seats were added in 2016 for a total of 440 in the first two years of the grant. In Memphis/Shelby County 220 new seats were added in 2016 for a total of 880 in the first two years of the grant. These funds, combined with our 2015 experiences, have resulted in significant progress in increasing access to high quality classrooms for income eligible children and improving the quality of existing classrooms in each community. Over 3600 children have benefited from these quality improvements. The grant has also allowed the state to strengthen its infrastructure to support high quality pre-K not only in the grant supported communities but within the state pre-K programs.

## **State's Goals and Objectives:**

- To significantly increase pre-K access for Eligible Children in high need communities of Memphis and Nashville
- To strengthen quality through upgrading existing pre-K seats in both communities to include all elements of high quality preschool programs, with an emphasis on providing Comprehensive Services to existing classrooms, implementing a teacher coaching model and supporting high quality professional development
- To strengthen alignment of the birth to third grade continuum
- To build Tennessee's pre-K infrastructure, particularly in the use of data to measure the impact of program improvements
- To support and expand the local communities' infrastructure for future sustainability

Although the two Subgrantees represent the two largest urban districts in the state, the grant implementation has been unique to each community. There are some similarities, each has expanded classrooms in high need areas, each as successfully enrolled eligible children in expansion seats and existing seats have been improved. But each community has made the improvements in ways to meet the needs of the local teachers, children, families and communities. The following provides an overview of each districts progress on meeting the goals of the grant:

### **Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS)**

During year two, the federal Preschool Development Grant-Expansion (PDG-E) continues to play an integral role in transforming early childhood education for children and families in Davidson County. Utilizing PDG-E funds, MNPS has expanded access to high quality preschool programs and strengthened the quality of existing classrooms. Funds have also allowed MNPS to provide professional development to strengthen the birth through third grade continuum.

MNPS has been afforded the opportunity to embed the constructivist approach, provide guidance for shared

and integrated reading, create a strategy to reduce transition times, develop a plan to support pre-K teachers and other teachers to provide engaged teaching and learning for English Learners (EL), as well as begin the steps for creating environments that will support the social-emotional needs of its youngest learners in all classrooms. PDG-E funding has allowed MNPS to create effective systems and establish clear expectations, which will continue to positively impact principals, teachers, families, and students in grades pre-K through third grade. Below is a list of some of the successes experienced during year two of the grant:

### **Increase Access**

In the PDG-E grant, MNPS set a goal to add 440 new seats and to maintain the operation of those classrooms through the grant period and beyond. In year two, MNPS added 240 seats to increase access to high quality pre-K in underserved, high need areas by opening an Early Learning Center, two community sites, and three classrooms in elementary schools. The new seats were strategically placed in in the district to accommodate the high wait list from year one. MNPS upgraded classroom facilities and, through PDG-E funding, purchased Creative Curriculum, furnishings, supplies and materials to support the additional 240 seats. MNPS continues to sustain the 200 expansion seats from 2015-2016.

### **Improve Existing Classrooms**

MNPS has used PDG-E funds to improve over 2300 seats by providing evidenced-based, developmentally appropriate professional development, coaching support for all district classrooms, and comprehensive services for eligible children and families across the district. The following describes improvement activities in year two:

#### **Professional Development:**

PDG-E funds have allowed MNPS to strengthen the quality of Pre-K classrooms across the district by providing over 380 hours of district led professional development for over 450 teachers, educational assistants, coaches, and administrators to support best practice in curriculum implementation, instructional strategies, formative and summative assessments, and classroom environment aligned to the constructivist approach. MNPS continued to embed Creative Curriculum and GOLD assessment district wide and through a contract with Teaching Strategies, professional development continued to be provided to principals, coaches, teachers and educational assistants to implement Creative Curriculum with fidelity. Other topics include Pyramid Model, Active Learning Transitions, Integrating & Elevating Math Instruction, and Responsive Planning. Multiple modes and times of delivery of professional development were used such as Lunch & Learn, Super Saturdays, Mighty Minutes, and After Hours.

#### **Coaching and Leadership Development**

All coaches and Multi-Classroom Leaders (MCL) utilized reflective coaching techniques and action planning with all pre-k teachers. Teachers have monthly goals based on observations (such as ECERS, CLASS, or TPOT), and coaches meet with teachers to monitor progress. Monthly meetings are held for pre-K coaches and MCLs, and emphasis is placed on coaching, instruction, social-emotional development, and literacy strategies.

#### **Comprehensive Services**

MNPS started to implement its comprehensive service plan fully in year two. Services and supports for pre-k students and families include:

**Catholic Charities** provides services to MNPS pre-K families who have the most critical needs through Family Advocates. Services include support with homelessness, behavioral issues, mental health, housing needs, legal needs, transportation, and educational needs. Family Advocates also support pre-k children with chronic absenteeism.

**Well Child** prioritized vision and hearing screenings for students who are located in schools who are receiving PDG-E funding.

**Conexion Americas** offers Parents as Partners, a training offered to help parents claim their role as their

child's first and most important teacher, and provided a Family Engagement Coach to support EL families. The Family Engagement Coach facilitated workshops to strengthen teacher capacity to engage with families effectively and create successful academic partnerships.

**Family Involvement Specialists (FIS)** offered workshops, consultation, and training for both families and teaching staff at schools across the district with over 2200 participants. FIS disseminated 'Take-Home Bags' which provide activities from Creative Curriculum for families, along with supplies/books for the activities with ideas and resources to support learning at home. FIS developed 35 new pre-K community partnerships to improve school, student, and family outcomes by connecting families, schools and the community.

**K-Readiness Newsletter** (in English, Arabic and Spanish) was distributed monthly to all MNPS pre-K students and their families, and to community partners. The newsletter provided a guide for families to support their child's academic success, and also increased awareness of resources in the community.

**Teachers Involving Parents (TIP) Professional Development program** helped pre-K teachers and educational assistants increase their skill set and self-efficacy in partnering with families through innovative and effective family engagement efforts.

**MNPS pre-K Facebook and Twitter platforms** were launched in year two with platforms to provide additional communication and engagement between MNPS, families and educators.

### **Strengthen Birth to Third Grade Continuum**

Over 400 pre-K through fourth grade teachers participated in professional development and peer workshops created to address the unique challenges, barriers, and opportunities experienced by teachers in the district related to family engagement.

Through a contract with Staff Development Educators, MNPS hosted an early learning conference for pre-K through second grade teachers that focused on research-based practices in June 2016, where teachers from across the state participated.

MNPS offered Pre-K through fourth grade coaches the opportunity to attend a vertical collaborative coaches' meeting two times during the 2016-2017 school year which focused on coaching strategies, developmentally appropriate practice, and reinforcement of the district's literacy initiatives.

MNPS updated the content of the iTrails website, a resource to assist families with preparing for Kindergarten. The website supports educators, homeschooled families, children not attending Pre-K, daycares and community sites in providing resources and information on getting ready for Kindergarten.

### **Shelby County Consortium (SCC)**

The Shelby County Consortium, established for the PDG-E grant, is made up of four districts: Shelby County Schools serving the city of Memphis, Bartlett City Schools and Millington Municipal Schools, serving suburbs of Memphis, and the Achievement School District (ASD), created to improve the bottom performing schools in the state. During year two of this grant each district continued to strengthen the quality of their individual programs through professional development and use of data-based decision making. Using Peabody Research Institute (PRI) Year One Grant Evaluation Report, and district and state observations such as CLASS and ECERS, the Consortium encouraged teachers and staff to increase the use of positive classroom management techniques, and to restructure the classroom daily schedule to increase center time and outdoor play and decrease transitions and whole group teacher directed learning. While each district has independently made changes to improve quality as a whole, the Consortium worked together to determine expansion sites based on areas of need in the community, collaborate on professional development for teachers and staff, and most importantly, work together with local advocacy groups to develop a sustainability plan for Shelby County, not only for the PDG-E expansion and improvement sites but for the entire the community. Below is a list of some of the successes experienced during year two:

## **Increase Access**

In the PDG-E grant the SCC's goal was to add 1000 new seats and maintain the operation of those classrooms during the grant and beyond. In year two, SCC added 220 seats to increase access to high quality pre-K in underserved, high need areas, with the opening of five classrooms at ASD sites and six classrooms in Shelby County Schools. SCC continues to sustain the facilities for the 660 seats from 2015-2016. Of note, the challenge for the Consortium is to find locations in high need communities for new classrooms, as public school buildings tend to be at capacity. For this reason, in year two SCC did not open all the planned classrooms (opened 11 of the 13 specified in the grant application). Therefore planning and initial placement for the additional two classrooms, plus the four classrooms planned for year three, is already underway. The targeted 1000 new seats will be open by the start of year three.

## **Improve Existing Classrooms**

The SCS has used PDG-E funds to improve over 1300 seats by providing evidenced-based professional development, coaching support for teachers, and comprehensive services for eligible children and families across the district. The following describes activities implemented in year two:

### **Professional Development**

All SCC professional development activities are used to ensure that teachers, teaching assistants, coaches, advisors and administrators acquire the skills that are needed to support the development of children in early childhood classrooms. Consortium districts have provided training in collaboration with state consultants on topics such as Child Development, TN ELDS, Pyramid Model, ECERS and ELLCO, Developmentally Appropriate Practices, Technology in Early Childhood, Literacy/Language development, and Student Growth Portfolio Model.

One Consortium district organized PLCs with 619 teachers and general education teachers around collaborating and planning for use of inclusive practices to include children with IEPs in general education pre-K classrooms when allowable in their IEP.

In Shelby County Schools, teacher assistants that do not hold a Child Development Associate (CDA) degree or beyond are enrolled in a CDA course through Southwest TN Community College. The cohort meets monthly for 12 months with a certified CDA college professor.

Several of the districts have coaches, advisors or monitors that support quality practices in classrooms to improve overall instruction for all students. They provide observation feedback, and support for academic and behavior challenges in the classroom.

### **Comprehensive Services**

SCC recognizes the importance of providing comprehensive services in early childhood and the impact they have on removing barriers that impact learning. The model the Consortium follows is the national Head Start comprehensive services framework in order to better serve children and meet their health, dental, and mental health needs. The components of the comprehensive services include:

**Family Service Advocates and Family Service Workers** work with families directly and are assigned to all district classrooms. They facilitate parents in education, program planning, case management to assist families in assessing their own needs, identifying and securing services and building upon their individual strengths. Advocates access a variety of community resources for families in addition to crisis intervention and emergency assistance. Above all, both the Advocates and Service Workers work closely with community agencies as advocates for the parents and the early childhood program.

**A Family Enrichment Center** with spaces to meet and talk, computers for parents to use for job searches, and books on child development has been opened. Classes about parenting, curriculum, and other topics as identified have been conducted throughout the school year at the center.

**Mental health professionals work** with staff and parents to increase awareness of the special problems of

children and provide a link to mental health resources.

### **Strengthen Birth to Third Grade Continuum**

A four-week summer program was designed for students who struggled in pre-k to extend student learning and improve literacy was held last summer at four early childhood centers.

ASD began building a Pre-K through third grade continuum, through curriculum and assessment alignment between early grades (focusing on literacy/language development and social emotional/executive function)

Shelby County Schools established collaboration with Porter-Leath on the opening of a state-of-the-art preschool and teacher training institute. The institute will establish a continuum of early childhood education, from prenatal to age five, and promote excellence for young children and their families.

### **State Infrastructure evaluating and improving quality**

The state partnered with Peabody Research Institute (PRI) in a study of the effectiveness of this pre-K expansion with the goal to better understand how the structural improvements the districts are putting in place affect outcomes for pre-k children. Peabody researchers assessed 1,409 students enrolled in new or improved pre-k classrooms and through a battery of assessment tools collected individual measures on these students' skills entering pre-K in the fall of 2015. The outcome data was collected in April of 2016. The original plan in the grant was to compare this data with the Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI) data the state was to implement in the fall of 2016. Unfortunately, individual student data was not collected (see state's response in GPRA 1 (c)). In fall 2016, PRI assessed 1865 children with the same battery of tools and will collect outcome data in April 2017. The plan is to compare this data with the newly adopted and implemented KEI in the fall of 2017 and with data from year one.

In addition to student assessments, PRI conducted classroom observations, enabling analysis of how teacher practices correlate with student learning. The results have informed both practice and professional development in all districts. The observation data gathered information on instructional time, instructional content, child engagement, positive feedback, and behavior reminders. Districts made structural changes in class schedules, transitions, center time, outside play, improved positive classroom management, and addressed the amount of teacher and child directed learning; all informed by the evaluation data. A family survey was conducted to determine effectiveness and knowledge of comprehensive services provided by the grant. There was a low response rate and both PRI and the districts have collaborated to reassess survey distribution.

### **Successes, Challenges and Next Steps**

Working in parallel with the PDG-E grant, the TDOE Division of Early Learning and Literacy has been developing a definition for high quality pre-k and revising the state Voluntary Pre-K application from a formula based system to a competitive grant process. The department is defining structural quality, program quality, and instructional quality. The work within the PDG-E programs, the PRI evaluation and the districts' experiences have informed the department's work. In the new VPK application, ten key components define a high quality Pre-K program and include:

1. Target funds to high needs students
2. Focus on access and attendance
3. Use data to improve student outcomes
4. Ensure curriculum is aligned to standards
5. Require developmentally appropriate schedule
6. Provide nurturing and responsive care
7. Support teachers through effective, job-embedded professional learning
8. Observe and monitor classrooms to ensure continuous improvement
9. Engage and support families

## 10. Secure community partnerships

This is where our PDG-E districts are being the most successful. Many of these quality components are being met and exceeded in the new and existing classroom. Our goal, as in the state's PDG-E grant application, is for districts to implement high quality programs for all the eligible children they serve. Access for eligible children, developmentally appropriate professional development, coaching, comprehensive services for families and the PRI evaluation are all helping the districts meet these high quality components.

There have been challenges at both at the state and district level. The state and the districts are working to address each of these challenges moving forward:

- Making sure eligible children are being served
  - Identifying ways to braid and blend funding to create economically diverse classrooms
  - Making sure eligible families are aware of registration processes and timelines
- Ensuring the districts' data systems report enrollment numbers accurately
  - Creating data check point dates to confirm eligible seats are being filled
  - Supporting inclusion practices and assisting districts to serve children with IEPs.
- Teacher and teaching assistant turnover rates
  - Establishing a method for districts to communicate changes
  - Providing a way for districts to document changes in state ePlan system
- Encouraging SCC to collaborate effectively
  - Planning Consortium team meetings to address specific needs or challenges
- Encouraging districts to document scope of work activities
  - Scheduling due dates for all documentation
  - Developing clear guidelines for grant changes
- Building capacity at the state level to effectively monitor and provide support and guidance to district coordinators and teaching staff
  - Creating a monitoring plan for year three
  - Determining whether funding is available for Program Manager
- Peabody Research Institute (PRI) and data sharing and article publication

Last year, we encountered a concern when the principal investigator for PDG-E program evaluation at Peabody Research Institute (PRI) at Vanderbilt University, shared a research perspective and data specific to Tennessee's Voluntary pre-K program (TN-VPK) and PDG-E programs via public articles and interviews. The articles and interviews portrayed the VPK and PDG programs in a negative light, identifying concerns about the quality of programs placed in elementary schools. The information shared was public information and the publications did not violate the terms of the contract between our department and PRI, but our concern centered on the fact that we (the department) had not been informed that the data would be released prior to the article(s) being published. After we (the department) became aware of the release, the executive director for the office of early learning at the TN-DOE, contacted the principal investigator directly to address the department's concerns. During the call, it was agreed that in the future, the department would be informed PRIOR to any release of data specific to the PDG-E grant. As well, we (the department) are in the process of structuring the year 3 contract with PRI for PDG-E program evaluation, and we are outlining contract parameters to ensure this does not become an issue again.

Currently, the districts are preparing year three budgets and scopes of work, with a first draft to be submitted

in April. Teachers, children, and families have seen the difference this grant has made in program capacity, teacher professional development and comprehensive services for families. State educational consultants and program evaluators have observed some quality changes across the classrooms. Year three plans include sustainability planning in both grant communities, development of early childhood administrator training modules, more work in enhancing the birth to third grade continuum through transition planning, joint professional development on developmentally appropriate practices, community wide kindergarten registration fairs, and most of all supporting and encouraging teachers and teaching assistants to provide responsive high quality learning for the young children in their care.



**U.S. Department of Education**  
**PDG Annual Performance Report**  
**Grant Status Form**  
**Explanation of Progress (524B Section A)**  
Based on ED 524B OMB No. 1894-0003 Exp. 06/30/2017

Grantee State: TN PR/Award #: S419B150026

**Section A: Performance Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (narrative)**

**1. Project Objective**

**1(a) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant.** Describe the State's progress in meeting this Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measure based on enrollment of Eligible Children in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant as of December 1, 2016.

Tennessee was successful in meeting the goal of increasing the number of eligible children served in high quality preschool programs as proposed in the grant application. In the fall of 2016, MNPS opened 12 new classrooms making available 240 new seats for eligible children. With these new seats and the 200 seats added in year one of the grant, there is now a total of 440 new seats available eligible children in MNPS. In the fall of 2016 Shelby County Consortium opened 11 new classrooms making available 220 new seats for eligible children. With these new seats and the 660 seats added in year one of the grant, there is now a total of 880 new seats available eligible children in the Shelby County Consortium. The goal was not only to add new seats but to make sure that eligible children were recruited and enrolled in these seats. Tennessee is meeting that goal. Of the 1320 new seats added in both subgrantee districts 1270 seats were in use as of December 1, 2016. 96% eligibility has been met.

There are several factors that may be reflected in the percentage of eligible students enrolled in grant funded classrooms. Lack of available classroom space in areas of high need often results in a preschool site location outside of the targeted high need area which may negatively impact enrollment. Additionally, MNPS has a district diversity goal to ensure racial, ethnic, cultural and socio-economic diversity in classrooms across the district, including pre-K, and therefore some students enrolled in grant funded preschool classrooms may not meet the eligibility requirements for this grant.

It should be noted that both subgrantees have a demonstrated need for high quality preschool seats that significantly exceeds the current number of available seats. This fact, along with the eligibility data suggests the need for greater examination of enrollment patterns and increased recruitment efforts, which both subgrantees will address in their implementation plans for year three of the grant.

It should also be noted that the Shelby County Consortium will open another six new classrooms in the fall of 2017, which will meet the number of classrooms proposed in Tennessee's grant application (50 classrooms (1000 slots) in Shelby County Consortium and 22 classrooms (440 slots) in MNPS).

Please describe, as required in Program Requirement (k)(2) in the Notice Inviting Applicants (NIA), how the State established policies and procedures that ensure that the percentage of Eligible Children with disabilities served by the High-Quality Preschool Programs is not less than either the percentage of four-year-old children served statewide through part B, section 619 of IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.), or the current national average, whichever is greater.

*Note: The current national percentage of four year-old-children receiving services through part B, section 619 of IDEA is 6.4%. Source: 2012 IDEA Part B Child Count (www.ideadata.org). States should include detailed information on ALL structural elements.*

Tennessee continues to strengthen its stance for supporting and ensuring children with disabilities have access to high quality early childhood programs which will support the goals identified on their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). As such, our IDEA 619 preschool coordinator and his staff work tirelessly to ensure children are included in general education classrooms and that these programs meet the needs of all children. Since the inception of our state preschool program we have encouraged the enrollment of children with disabilities. In this year's revised Voluntary Pre-K Program application, districts have been asked to demonstrate efforts to enroll approximately 10 percent of students with IEPs for priority enrollment as part of the state's competitive funding process this is also the expectation for the new expansion PDG classrooms.

The percent of children with IEPs served in the grant funded classrooms is 6.6% which exceeds the national average of 6.4%. However, this is a decrease 0.7% from the first year of the grant, with Shelby County Schools only serving approximately 3% of students with disabilities. Shelby County Schools has noted in the past that due to the developmental nature of young children, most children are not identified for disability services until they are in Kindergarten or beyond. In order to increase the percentage of students with IEPs being served in pre-k classrooms, Shelby County Schools collaborates with the Division of Exceptional Children to attempt to place more students who have disabilities in typical Pre-K classrooms. Identifying students that may require special services as early as possible, especially during the screening process, will increase numbers of students with special needs being served. The Divisions of Exceptional Children and Early Childhood are currently collaborating to identify 619 students who can be mainstreamed into PDG classrooms for next year. This collaboration will increase the number of students with disabilities served through our program. In addition, during the enrollment process, three seats are reserved for students with disabilities. These seats are filled with typical students that met eligibility, only if and when it was determined there were no children with disabilities that needed those seats usually within the first 8 weeks of the school year. This remains a high priority area for the school district, and the Divisions of Exceptional Children and Early Childhood are currently collaborating to identify students with IEPs to enroll in PDG classrooms for next year.

Describe the State's progress in increasing the number and percentage of Eligible Children served in High-Quality Preschool Programs funded by the grant.

In both MNPS and the Shelby County Consortium, the need for high quality preschool seats exceeds the number of seats available. Within the first two years of this grant, 66 new classrooms have been opened to serve 1320 students. Of those 1320 seats, 1270 or 96% of them are serving eligible children. With the addition of 1270 eligible children to the 18,615 eligible children served in TN Voluntary Pre-K, TN is now serving approximately 25% of TN 4 year old population. Additionally with the new expansion classrooms, 234 existing classrooms are receiving improvements, such as professional development, instructional coaching support and comprehensive student supports.

Moving forward, both subgrantees are focused on recruitment efforts to fill all available seats and increase the enrollment of students with IEPs. Robust recruitment plans are being developed and include strategies and systems such as:

- Collaboration among departments to establish enrollment processes, targeted goals and expectations
- Identification of specific roles across the districts to assist in meeting registration goals
- Creation of a data system for selecting eligible applicants and mailings to 1<sup>st</sup> selected students earlier in the registration period
- Development of clear communication for families on the steps to apply, accept and enroll for Pre-K and use creative methods for distributing information and getting community involvement in the registration process
- Begin to implement various methods of recruitment to increase student enrollment include: Pre-K website, school newsletters, school events, PTA meetings, advertisement in local newspaper and providing Public Service Announcements on local radio stations.
- Designation of Family Information Centers to assist in providing information to families and to be central sites for registration beyond the local school sites.
- Development of a recruitment and selection calendar that outlines enrollment dates, acceptance dates and dates for accessing roster, waitlist and vacancy reports
- Collaborate with community childcare and local Head Start grantees to seek out eligible students for all programs
- Provide support and assistance for eligible English Language Learners and families to apply and complete registration process, and encourage families to accept positions.

**1(b) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of children served overall in the State Preschool Program.** Please describe any increases or decreases in this GPRA measure based on fall enrollment in the State Preschool Program for the 2016-17 school year.

Based on the data collected and entered in GPRA 1 (b), Tennessee increased enrollment for the 2016-17 school year by 2,967 students, moving from a total enrollment of 15,648 students in 2015-16 to 18,615 students in the current year. We believe that this increase is not a true reflection of increased enrollment; rather this increase reflects more accurate data reporting by districts across the state. The addition of a grant funded data manager this year has provided the needed capacity to oversee data quality and to support districts to improve their data reporting processes.



**1(c) GPRA Performance Measure: The number and percentage of children in the High-Need Communities served by the grant that are ready for kindergarten as determined by the State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment or, if the State does not yet have a Kindergarten Entry Assessment, other valid and reliable means of determining school readiness.**

*In the Year 2 APR, grantees will provide disaggregated data on the school readiness of the children served by the grant. This may include information collected about the children served by the grant at the end of their 2015-16 preschool year or in their 2016-17 kindergarten year. States may provide data from a sample of children (e.g., a sample being used for any evaluation).*

In the Year 2 APR, grantees must describe their progress towards identifying the measures, methods, and data on the school readiness of children served by the Preschool Development Grant. In the narrative below provide the following information:

- The name of the assessment tool(s) and the Essential Domains of School Readiness measured;
- When the assessment tool(s) is/are given (e.g., in preschool and/or kindergarten);
- Whether the assessment is mandated by the State, and for which children;
- How long the State has been using the assessment tool(s);
- Whether the assessment tool(s) is/are implemented throughout the High-Need Community and/or Statewide;
- Whether the State provides or will provide training for local staff administering the assessment. If so, describe the requirements including processes to ensure continued reliability in the administration of the measure;
- If school readiness data is reported to the State, describe when and how data are reported.

Also, please describe, if applicable:

- The State's definition of "school readiness;"
- Disaggregated information about children's school readiness on individual domains or subsets of the measure;
- School readiness data for children disaggregated by subgroup (e.g., students who are American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian, not Pacific Islander; Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander; Black or African American; Hispanic/Latino; White, not Hispanic; two or more races; with disabilities; English learners; and from any other subgroups the state determines appropriate; and
- How the State will continue to make progress in meeting this GPRA measure.

At this time, Tennessee does not have individual child kindergarten readiness data for children that attended pre-k in the 2015-2016 school year. While 2147 children in 113 classrooms participated in a Kindergarten Entry Field Test (KEFT) in the fall of 2016, individual data was not collected as the purpose of the KEFT was to identify test items that were valid and reliable in measuring kindergarten readiness for the development of a new version of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) developed by the Maryland, Ohio, John Hopkins University (JHU) and West Ed consortium. The state's participation in the KEFT provided valuable insight in the implementation of a Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI) (Tennessee's selected name for the tool) and assisted in the planning and development of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for a statewide KEI while introducing the assessment process to a selected number of kindergarten teachers across the five PDG districts.

The following are the steps the state has taken to ensure that there will be kindergarten readiness data collected on the children that are attending PDG expansion and enhanced classrooms this school year (2016-2017) in the fall of 2017 as they enter kindergarten:

**Fall 2015:**

- The Office of Early Learning (OEL) administered a statewide survey to all LEAs to determine what

kindergarten entry assessments are currently used by districts and what specific benchmarks were used to define kindergarten ready, if any. Results indicated the need for a coherent definition of kindergarten readiness and the tools the districts used to determine kindergarten readiness were used as screeners for classroom placement or to assess literacy skills. TN current readiness model can be found at: <https://www.kidcentraltn.com/article/tennessee-s-school-readiness-model>.

#### **Winter 2016:**

- The OEL examined several options for a Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI) (Tennessee's selected name for the tool) based on specific DOE-determined requirements. These requirements included an assessment that is research based and psychometrically reliable and valid, aligned to TN standards, and includes measurable benchmarks in multiple developmental domains, including language and literacy, math and cognition, social-emotional development, physical development and approaches to learning.
- The TDOE OEL met with a team from Maryland, West Ed and John Hopkins University on December 15, 2015 to examine possibilities for collaboration and/or development of TN-specific KES.
- OEL determined that the Maryland consortium was the best choice for a KEI field test due to their alignment with our requirements.

#### **Spring 2016:**

- OEL selected the Maryland consortium for the KEI field test and chose five districts to participate based on their participation as a grantee in the Preschool Development Grant, which required implementation of a KEI in 2016-17. These districts include Metro Nashville Public Schools, Shelby County Schools, the Achievement School District, Bartlett City Schools and Millington Municipal District.
- The state began a process to enter into a MOU with the Maryland-Ohio consortium of states, and a no cost contract with WestEd and John Hopkins University (JHU) for the development and field testing of an early childhood assessment: the KEI, version 2.0.

#### **Summer 2016:**

- A MOU was executed between the Maryland State DOE and the TN DOE for Tennessee to join the consortium of states as a charter state. And, executed a no cost professional services contract with WestEd and JHU, partners in the consortium for the design, development, professional training, technology and data management and evaluation of the KES pilot/field test in fall of 2016.
- WestEd/JHU led train the trainer sessions for staff and data managers from all five districts. The partners trained 19 trainers who in turn trained 113 kindergarten teachers in 26 schools across the five districts.

#### **Fall 2016:**

- Pilot KEFT was implemented from September 1st - November 11th. The purpose of the field test was to determine validity and reliability of items. 113 teachers assessed 2147 kindergarteners across the five PDG districts using two different test forms of the KEFT. Each child was assessed on 52 items that will eventually be used as the consortium KRA version 2.0 and an extra item bank. No individual data was collected or analyzed.

#### **Winter 2016-2017:**

- The KRA consortium members met and reviewed item analysis and planned for future implementation. TNDOE was included in the item discussion.
- In Early December the state opened the Response for Proposal (RFP) process to determine availability and select a Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI) to use for implementation starting the fall of 2017.

The requirements in this RFP included that the KEI we use to align to the following domains of the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards:

- Language and literacy (This includes reading literature, reading informational text, reading foundational skills, writing, speaking and listening and language)

- Math (This includes counting and cardinality, operations and algebraic thinking, measurement and data, and geometry)
- Social foundations (This includes approaches to learning and social-emotional development)
- Physical development and health

Also, it was requested the assessment items would be conducted through activities and interactive games and stories between the teachers and students, and through teacher observations of students. This will not be an assessment that requires students to produce written or verbal responses in one sitting. It will be administered by kindergarten teachers over the course of the first eight weeks of school.

- The final response had three different KEI submitted for consideration. At this time one, was selected and is in the public viewing stage. The timeline for a contract to be put in place is by March and training trainers by May. The KEI has been submitted by West ED and will be a version of Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP).

More information about the DRDP can be found at <https://www.desiredresults.us/>

### **Spring 2017**

- Held roundtable discussions with teachers and trainers who volunteered to share experiences with KEFT implementation. Teachers reported biggest challenge was due to the late assessment window the KEFT was not helpful in informing practice (this was due to access to the computer software). Some discussion indicated that the tool did not measure what was needed, for example all of the alphabet/sounds. The KEFT was a different format then the newly adopted DRDP.

### **Summer 2017:**

- KEI Train the trainer will occur for the 5 PDG districts and state staff
- Trained trainers will train all kindergarten teachers in the 5 PDG districts

### **Fall 2017:**

- Tennessee's two week KEI implementation window will be approximately thirty days after the start of school. Once administration is complete teachers, principals, districts and the state will having "live" access to data. Full data analysis to follow administration window.

### **Late Fall/Early Winter 2017-2018:**

- Initial data reports will be provided from fall implementation of KEI

**For Preschool Development Grants - Development Grants States ONLY:**

**1(d) GPRA Performance Measure: The number of States that collect and analyze data on State Preschool Program quality, including the structural elements of quality specified in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs.**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying most of the page below the text. It is intended for data entry or reporting.

## Section A: Part B - Selection Criteria

In this section of the APR, States will report on their progress addressing the Preschool Development Grant's selection criteria. The State should read the questions carefully and report in the narrative fields directly below the questions. Please include any data, data notes or formulas to help the readers understand the State's narrative responses.

### 1. Ensuring Quality in Preschool Programs (Selection Criteria "C" of the application)

Describe the State's use of funds received over the grant period for State Preschool Program infrastructure and quality improvements, including the State's efforts to implement a system of monitoring and support at the State level toward activities such as those described in Section (C)(1)(a-k) of the NIA.

*Note: States will report amounts and percentage of funds for State Preschool Program infrastructure and High-Quality Preschool Programs in the Competitive Preference Priority 3 Chart.*

During the 2nd year of implementation, our time and efforts have focused on supporting and consulting with our Subgrantees, to implement PDG objectives. Our state continues to consult with our CELO technical assistance support team, Alliance for Early Education (Ounce) and other states as we further develop and implement our plan to increase quality across our Subgrantee classrooms as well as across our state's voluntary pre-K.

A description of our progress and next steps on each of the structural elements Tennessee is strengthening are as follows (bolded sections are Tennessee's PDG emphasis):

*(a) Enhancing or expanding Early Learning and Development Standards* - The Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (TNELDS) were adopted by the Tennessee State Board of Education in August 2012 and are aligned with the state Kindergarten standards. In December of 2016, the new state Kindergarten standards were adopted. Since the Kindergarten standards have been aligned to the TNELDS in the past, the TNELDS will be reviewed and revised in 2017 and aligned with the newly adopted Kindergarten Standards.

*(b) Implementing Program Standards consistent with a High-Quality Preschool Program* - The program standards in Tennessee are also aligned with the Pre-K Guidelines and Compliance Standards (including health and safety) and are evaluated twice yearly by state Program Evaluators (PEs) in each PDG provider. The Program Evaluators have continued to evaluate all of the PDG programs twice yearly in year 2. The new Pre-K Guidelines and Compliance Standards were adopted in January and will go into effect July 1, 2017. Along with Guidelines and Compliance the PEs will also begin observing for high quality literacy implementation in pre-K classrooms. Additionally, we have significantly revised our VPK application to reflect high quality indicators based on research from the Vanderbilt study and other national research. This new criteria will be used to shift our VPK funding from a formula-based method to a competitive grant process as required by the state's PreK Quality Act.

*(c) Supporting programs in meeting the needs of children with disabilities and English learners, including in workforce development* - The Subgrantees have started focusing on inclusive education for all children. The emphasis has been on providing professional development and coaching support for inclusive practice. MNPS has added an English Learner coaching position to assist pre-K teachers and teachers in the K-3<sup>rd</sup> continuum to support English language learners in the classroom. Shelby County Schools have included 619 teachers in their early learning PLCs and are working to use inclusive practices by including children with IEPs in general education pre-K classrooms when allowed in their IEP.

*(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* - As part of the expansion planning for new classrooms each Subgrantee determined the need of additional classroom seats through multiple procedures including current availability of seats, number of kindergarten seats available and projected growth

in the communities of need. In Some of the expansion classrooms are located in community settings (child care centers)in order to provide greater access in areas of high need. There is a 96% utilization of these new slots with eligible children because of this strategic placement of classrooms.

*(e) Establishing or upgrading preschool teacher education and licensure requirements* - Tennessee requires that pre-K teachers in the public school hold a Bachelor's degree and Early Childhood Education certification. TCA § 49-6-104 (b)(2) requires teachers to hold Bachelor's degree and Early Childhood certification.

***(f) Improvements to teacher and administrator early education training programs and professional development*** -As our state has undertaken the process of improving quality across Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) and the PDG classroom, we have learned with our Subgrantees in year one and two the importance of effective professional development and coaching support. This is not only important for the classroom teacher, but also teaching assistants, administrators and coaches. The state continues to strengthen and encourage districts to take a closer look at the various components of their practices including curriculum, assessments and coaching models through both the PDG classrooms as well as the statewide pre-K program (VPK). The new VPK application emphasizes eligibility, aligning curriculum to TNELDS, increasing expectations for high quality and providing research professional development in developmentally appropriate practice.

The state consultants and program evaluators have provided training to the coaches and classroom leaders in both the Shelby County Consortium and the MNPS to support implementation.

- Observation and Coaching - Staff from the Tennessee Department of Education completed ECERS-R classroom assessments for the second year expansion classrooms, where the teacher returned for the second year. The overall scores improved in the majority of the second year classrooms by almost one point. The scores and observation notes with strengths and areas of growth were shared with the Subgrantees' district coordinators and coaches/advisors. In turn, the coaches shared the reports with teachers. In MNPS coaches/teachers developed action plans to strengthen classroom practice. The coaches use the action plans to follow-up on a monthly basis. The state plans to conduct ECERS-R in year 2 expansion classrooms with action planning in the fall of 2017. Cost for this observation and consultation will be included as part of the job duties of the education consultants working on this project.
  
- Teacher training- the state has identified professional development core competencies as required for all preschool classroom staff in an effort to have a solid foundation on which to develop a high quality pre-K classroom. Each district in collaboration with state consultants developed a training calendar offering these topics for the 2016-17 school year.
  - Child Development
  - TN Early Learning Developmental Standards
  - Pyramid Model- social and emotional development
  - ECERS and ELLCO
  - Developmentally Appropriate Practices
  
- Subgrantees have provided additional training topics including (but not limited to) the district curriculum, personal safety curriculum, classroom management, literacy and language, math and others described throughout this report.
  
- In addition to the training for coaches and teaching staff, the department will further pursue offering administrator training. Administrator training will not only impact practices at the pre-K level but across the pre-K-3 learning continuum. The creation of administrative modules on early childhood development and appropriate practices are in the planning stages. Currently administrators have been invited to participate in training provided to pre-K teachers and staff. As part of the new pre-K - K student growth portfolio, training has been provided to administrators, coaches and coordinators. Additionally, an early childhood guidance document

connected to the state teacher evaluation has been developed to provide administrators with “look fors” in developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood classrooms.

*(g)Implementing a Statewide Longitudinal Data System to link preschool and elementary and secondary school data-* A statewide student data system is already in place and the PDGE Data Manager maintains the system while collaborating with the Subgrantee data management teams to ensure data is entered correctly and is available to inform practice. These improved practices have provided more accurate reporting of eligible children and other grant required data.

***(h)A Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment System*** -Tennessee's plan for a comprehensive early learning assessment system includes the following components:

- **Student assessment:** The Subgrantees are committed to achieving ambitious goals for improvements in both preschool and kindergarten. The state contracted with Peabody Research Institute (PRI) to continue to complete student assessments on 1865 students in the fall 2016 and will assess these same students again this spring. PRI completed the same assessment cycle in 2015-2016 using a full assessment battery (spring and fall was completed on 1409 children). Based on prior research completed by PRI using the same assessment tools as in similar pre-K classrooms in MNPS, benchmarks for each assessment tool were set and progress on reaching these benchmarks were measured by the children assessed in year one of this grant. The following benchmarks for the expansion sites in Memphis and Nashville were established on the battery of measures. Progress on reaching the benchmarks will be measured on 10 children from each of the 200 classrooms each year. These are the Subgrantee's preschool measureable outcome goals are:
  1. By the end of the pre-K year, 75% of the children will score above 85 on the PPVT.
  2. By the end of the pre-K year, 75% of the children will score above 85 on Spelling.
  3. By the end of the pre-K year, 75% of the children will score above 85 on Quantitative Concepts.
  4. For the simpler measures, Letter Word Identification and Applied Problems, 90% of the pre-K children will score above 85.

The following are the aggregate benchmark results for year one:

**Benchmarks Overall**

75% of the children will score above 85 on the PPVT **Actual = 68%** - Not met

90% of the children will score above 90 on Letter Word **Actual = 92%** - Met

75% of the children will score above 85 on Spelling **Actual = 69%** - Not met

90% of the pre-K children will score above 85 on Applied Problems **Actual = 90%** - Met

75% of the children will score above 85 on Quantitative Concepts **Actual = 70%** - Not met

Year one was considered the “baseline” year and the results of the assessments and the classroom observations (see below) have been used to inform and improve practice in areas such as use of instructional time (decrease time spent in whole groups, increasing time in centers and outside play), transitions, classroom management procedures, and high quality instructional practices.

The initial plan was to link these benchmarks to the kindergarten readiness screening instrument chosen by the state and Subgrantees. This did not occur as noted in the narrative for GPRA 1 (c). The intention of the state is that next fall the benchmarks from the 2016-2017 child assessments will be linked to the new KEI. The Subgrantees' Kindergarten readiness measurable outcome goal is to have 75% of participating preschool students score as kindergarten ready on at least three of the five domains as measured by the new KEI instrument. The state infrastructure portion of the grant will fund PRI's contract and fully fund two Education Consultants at TDOE who will support the implementation of both of these assessments.

*(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 state of Tennessee has created a website that provides resources and information for families about childhood development and services that are available to support families and children (<http://kidcentraltn.com/>). In addition each Subgrantee is using funds to enhance the comprehensive services that children and families received. Included in these services are physical health screenings and referrals, family supports within the communities for aftercare, mental health services, basic needs (food and clothing as needed), sharing developmentally appropriate practices through connecting community partners (libraries, museums, zoos & parks), and implementing transition planning to and from pre-K to support children and families from one education system to another. These are described in more detail in "The progress the State has made in establishing High-Quality Preschool Programs" section. Within the state pre-K guideline, family engagement is required. Additional parent teacher conference are expected as well as home visiting.

*(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 -* Tennessee has a Readiness Model that links families, children, schools and communities as a framework of support. Each district has a community advisory council to discuss the pre-K opportunities, community resources and identify needs in their district.

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

The state continues to partner with PRI to augment its current quality assessments to focus on the components of effective high-quality preschool.

- **Quality assessment:** 139 classrooms were observed by PRI trained individuals using a **Narrative Record** in the winter of 2016. The narrative record allows for summaries that include, but are not limited to, the amount of time devoted to whole-class instruction, the amount of time spent on mathematics, and the percentage of episodes that a teacher used a high level of inference in his or her instruction. A second tool, the **Pre-Kindergarten Classroom Dynamics Rating Scale** is a collection of behaviorally anchored ratings completed by observers at the end of each of the full-day observations. These questions include groups of items that fall under the headings of Overall Impression, Classroom Management, Teacher Responsiveness, Community, and Academic and Learning-related Behaviors. A summary of the PRI Observation is available upon request. Year one was considered the "baseline" year and the results of the assessments (see above) and the classroom observations inform and improve practice in areas such as use of instructional time (decrease time spent in whole groups, increasing time in centers and outside play), transitions, classroom management procedures, and high quality instructional practices. The observation and assessment summaries were shared with each Subgrantee and district coordinators developed priority topics for professional development and coaching during year two of the grant.
- Note: part of the grant's infrastructure will fund PRI's contract and fully fund two Education Consultants at TDOE who will help with administering the assessment if necessary.

**Grant support:** The Education Consultant and PEs positions funded by the grant oversee the implementation of the grant and support training and technical assistance.

## **2. Expanding High-Quality Preschool Programs in Each High-Need Community (Selection Criteria D of application)**

Describe the progress the State has made during the reporting year to implement and sustain voluntary high quality preschool programs for eligible children in two or more High-Need Communities (Selection Criteria D(4) of the application) that include **ALL** structural elements listed below that are included in the definition of High-Quality Preschool Programs. States should include detailed information on ALL structural elements.

- High staff qualifications, including a teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a bachelor's degree in any field with a State-approved alternative pathway, which may include coursework, clinical practice, and evidence of knowledge of content and pedagogy relating to early childhood, and teaching assistants with appropriate credentials;
- High-quality professional development for all staff;
- A child-to-instructional staff ratio of no more than 10 to 1;
- A class size of no more than 20 with, at a minimum, one teacher with high staff qualifications;
- A Full-Day program;
- Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities;
- Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence-based curricula, and learning environments that are aligned with the State Early Learning and Development Standards, for at least the year prior to kindergarten entry;
- Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities;
- Instructional staff salaries that are comparable to the salaries of local K-12 instructional staff;
- Program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement;
- On-site or accessible Comprehensive Services for children and community partnerships that promote families access to services that support their children's learning and development; and
- Evidence-based health and safety standards.

Please describe the progress the State has made in establishing High-Quality Preschool Programs that include ALL structural elements listed above that are evidence-based and nationally recognized as important for ensuring program quality.

Tennessee's current state funded pre-K program currently requires many of the structural elements identified in this section through state law T.C.A. 49-6-101 --110.

- *A teacher is required to hold a bachelor's degree and teacher licensure in early childhood education.* In Tennessee there are several different certifications that meet this requirement. Currently our licensure endorsements include a dual general education and special education license for birth through kindergarten, or a pre-K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade license, in either general education or special education. Previously offered endorsements also cover licensure to teach pre-K-4<sup>th</sup> grade. A district can apply for a waiver for a teacher if that person has an endorsement in another grade level, (i.e., K-6). The waiver is good for two years during which time the candidate must complete coursework and pass appropriate Praxis tests in order for a college or university to recommend that the teacher receiving a pre-K endorsement on his/her license. A waiver cannot be renewed if the teacher fails to complete any of these requirements. Teacher assistants are required to hold a minimum of a Child Development Credential, if available. If not, the assistant must have a high school diploma and prior experience working in an early childhood classroom.
- *All staff are required to have 18 hours of professional development in their first year of hire including child abuse reporting, and personal safety, and 12 hours of professional development in the following years.* All professional development must be related to early childhood development or education. Because of the revision of the state Preschool Rules and Regulations document, the required professional development hours will increase in year three of the grant.
- *Staff child ratio is 1 to 10 at all times except during nap or rest time.* This includes outdoor time, or participation in any activity outside the classroom
- *Class size capacity is 20 children regardless of classroom size.* It requires at least one licensed and early childhood endorsed teacher.
- *The pre-K day operates a minimum of 6 hours and may include a thirty minute nap time.*
- *Full inclusion of children with disabilities is encouraged.* This is beyond the occasional visit of children with special needs to participate with their peers in outside activities or other planned special activities. Approximately 10% of children enrolled in our state funded pre-K program are children with IEPs. Accommodations are made to ensure full participation of all students.
- *Classrooms are required to adhere to a scope of services specific to VPK as well as the State Board of Education's Early Childhood Policy* which addresses the requirement to use a state approved comprehensive curriculum, to provide hands on learning experiences, to be culturally and linguistically responsive to all students and families and to connect learning activities to the state's early learning developmental standards for four year olds
- *Teachers hired by the school district are compensated using the same pay scale and have the same rights as any other K-12 teacher.*
- *Education consultants and program evaluators (PEs) complete site visits regularly.* By state regulations that set standards for health and safety PEs are required by to make a minimum of two site visits per year. Additional oversight is completed through desktop review of various surveys and reports required by the Division of Early Learning and Literacy.
- *Funding from this grant was awarded to Subgrantees to provide access to comprehensive services that were not already in place prior to this school year.* These services include assessments of students as well as providing health, mental health, and counseling to families as requested or necessary.
- *State School Board Rules 0520-2-01-.01 --.16 provide evidence based health and safety*

*standards with which all schools must be in compliance.*

**The Tennessee PDG applications targeted the following structural elements and in year 2 Subgrantees have leveraged grant funds to address the expanding high quality program improvements through these examples:**

High-quality professional development for all staff

- Districts are committed to ensuring that educators are provided with ample opportunities to learn and develop, and that they have access to research-based practices that impact student outcomes.
- Pre-K staff in several districts were provided with a comprehensive training for all new employees. MNPS developed and implemented a one day “Tying it all together” training to have all staff on the same page for the year focusing on health and safety, compliance, district policies, school year priorities and non-negotiables determined by evidenced based practices and data collected by Peabody Research Institute (PRI), and teacher/staff evaluations.
- All districts provided on-going trainings tailored to individual and district wide needs of teachers and staff. Some professional development topics have included (but are not limited to): Curriculum Training, ECERS, ELLCO, Developmentally Appropriate Practices, TN Early Learning Developmental Standards, Health and Safety Curriculum, Developing Lesson Plans, Individualizing, Screenings/Assessments, Education Forms/Children Files, Child Supervision, Daily Observations, Pyramid Model (social and emotional development), Language and Literacy, Instructional Transitions, Constructivism, Comprehensive Services, Family Engagement and Inclusion Practices. All professional development activities were used to ensure that teachers, teaching assistants, coaches and administrators acquire the skills that are needed to support the development of the whole child in early childhood classrooms.
- Other staff development activities include job-embedded, continuous improvement strategies focused on goal setting and areas of refinement identified through the state teacher evaluation process.
- Staff development plans include summer institutes and professional development opportunities during pre-service in August.
- In the Shelby County Consortium, one district developed a professional development plan that provides all teachers with explicit training in the Pyramid Model and on the ECERS-R tool. These trainings enhance the quality of our program by ensuring that all teachers and teacher assistants acquire knowledge that will allow them to enhance their ability to address and support the individualized needs of young children and establish classrooms that are warm, inviting, and child friendly for the students.
- In the Shelby County School District teacher assistants that do not hold a Child Development Associate (CDA) degree or beyond are enrolled in a CDA course through Southwest TN Community College. The cohort meets monthly for 12 months with a certified CDA college professor.

**Inclusion of children with disabilities to ensure access to and full participation in all opportunities;**

Each district has taken steps to include and support children with disabilities to include children with disabilities in the PDG expansion classrooms. The following describe some of the activities and collaborations that have occurred in year two:

In Shelby County Schools teachers have collaborated with 619 preschool teachers in order to have greater inclusion rates in Pre-K classrooms. Students from the 619 preschool classes visit the typical Pre-K classes to engage in activities including morning meeting, center time, and small group instruction if it is part of the students' IEP. Professional development opportunities, that teach general education teachers how to modify lessons to include appropriate adjustments for those with special needs are available. The Divisions of Early Childhood and Exceptional Children administrative teams meet regularly to discuss best practices of inclusion

for children with disabilities. Specially trained staff works with community agencies to provide services to children with disabilities while simultaneously providing them with an integrated, developmentally appropriate early childhood experience within the classroom. Shelby County Schools Division of Exceptional Children works in conjunction with the Early Childhood Division and community organizations to ensure that disability services are provided to children enrolled in the program.

Through PDG-E funds, MNPS put additional systems in place to support inclusion.

- An Exceptional Education coach was employed through the grant, has provided trainings to support coaches, teachers and teaching assistants to implement strategies to provide differentiated instruction in the classroom.
- Infant-toddler Mighty Minutes were purchased to support blended and self-contained classrooms to meet children at their zone of proximal development.
- MNPS is piloting infant and toddler curriculum in three self-contained classroom to determine if it would be best to purchase this curriculum to meet student and classroom instructional needs.
- The number of Pre-K age children attending general education was increased due to strategically working with Exceptional Education Department to place children in least restrictive environment during the period from August-September across the district. The Early Learning Centers have provided opportunity for a new model called “continuum of services”. Students are placed in general education settings all year with support of push in and/or pull out (if needed). This model is individualized for each student and there is a transition period for the student and family to ensure correct placement and services at the time of entry. MNPS has found this model to be highly successful as measured by student IEP goals and school wide social-emotional goals.

**Developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction and evidence based curricula, and learning environments that are aligned with the State Early Learning and Development Standards, for at least the year prior to kindergarten entry;**

- The Shelby County Consortium currently utilizes the Opening the World of Learning (OWL) Comprehensive Curriculum. The OWL curriculum is comprehensive and aligned to the Tennessee academic state standards and TN-ELDS and includes research-based, field-tested content in oral language and literacy skills
- In both MNPS and the Shelby County Consortium there are several classrooms that implement Montessori and serve multi-age classrooms.
- In MNPS the PDG allowed the district to adopt and implement Creative Curriculum, which is aligned with the TN-ELDS. MNPS uses a constructivist approach to learning and has incorporated additional evidenced-based literacy and math supports that are also aligned with TN-ELDS. The grant has allowed the district to provide professional development in Creative Curriculum and work toward implementing to fidelity along with Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment.

**Individualized accommodations and supports so that all children can access and participate fully in learning activities;**

- Across Subgrantees, children receive a variety of individualized learning experiences to foster social, intellectual, physical and emotional growth. Children participate in indoor and outdoor play and are introduced to the concepts of literacy, language, science, social studies, math etc... They are encouraged to express their feelings, develop self-confidence and their ability to get along with others. Additional materials and resources have been purchased to ensure that all students have access to high quality instructional materials.
- Teachers receive professional development on strategies for organizing classrooms, classroom management and for leading effective small groups to promote independent student learning.

**On-site or accessible Comprehensive Services for children and community partnerships that promote families access to services that support their children's learning and development;**

In Tennessee's plan for improve existing classrooms was to provide comprehensive services to enhance family engagement, increase family involvement, and helping family access resources within the communities where they live. Each Subgrantee has implemented a variety of comprehensive services ranging from health screenings to parent education workshops to helping families find basic needs in their communities. The following are descriptions of some services provided through grant funding:

**Shelby County Consortium:**

In order to better serve children and meet their health, dental, and mental health needs the Pre-K program has established an extensive list of community partnerships:

- Lebonheur - to provide speech/hearing screenings
- Christ Community Health Services to provide dental cleanings and follow-up services
- University of Memphis School of Nursing, Memphis and Shelby County Health Department, Le Bonheur L.E.A.D, Southern College of Optometry
- Mental health providers to address the social/emotional needs of children while also providing strategies for parents and teachers to better meet the needs of pre-K children.

Contracted family service staff develop family partnership goals with parents that will help to identify the need for resource and referral within the community. This information is tracked to determine goal attainment for families and to ensure that pre-K staff are meeting the needs of families as identified in their family partnership goals.

Family engagement and family/community services can include:

- Individualized meetings with each incoming family
- Family Enrichment Center with spaces to meet and talk, computers for parents to use for job searches, and books on child development.
- Classes about parenting, curriculum, and other topics as identified will be conducted throughout the school year.
- AmeriCorps VISTA helping with community engagement efforts, such as volunteers, mentors, beautification, and community service opportunities.
- Wrap-around services / before and after care for families who enroll (a below-market fee applies or scholarships are available as needed).
- Each classroom is assigned a Family Service Advocate who works with families directly.
- Through the nutrition program, children are served breakfast, a balanced lunch, and a snack each day.

An essential part of every early childhood program is the involvement of parents in education, program planning, and operation. Parents play an active role in all aspects of the program. Through their involvement and other training and activities, parents also have the opportunity to gain skills and secure employment.

- A case management approach assists families in assessing their own needs, identifying and securing services and building upon their individual strengths.
- A variety of community resources are available to families in addition to crisis intervention and emergency assistance.
- During the enrollment process, each family is introduced to an assessment analysis that identifies the needs of the family (ex. education, employment, housing, transportation, etc.). Families are introduced to a goal setting process that identifies goals that may be of interest to the family to work towards. A written agreement is implemented that identifies strategies and time-

frames relative to the goals setting process.

- Staff members work closely with families as a supportive link to both the parent and the community resources. Based on the assessment results, community resources are identified and linked to families for services.
- Family Service Workers work closely with community agencies as advocates to the parents and to the Early Childhood program.
- Mental health professionals work with staff and parents to increase awareness of the special problems of children and provide a link to mental health resources. Referrals are submitted to the Mental Health unit and a team of staff work collaborative to establish a Mental Health Plan that meets the needs of the child. The process is tracked and documented for progress in the record-keeping data system.

### **MNPS**

During year two, with the support of PDG-E funds, MNPS continued to contract with Catholic Charities, Well Child, and Conexion Americas to implement specialized comprehensive services to Pre-K students.

- Catholic Charities provides services to MNPS pre-K families who have the most critical needs. During year two, six Family Advocates maintained a caseload of an average of 30 families to whom they provided services. Services can include support with homelessness, behavioral issues, mental health, housing needs, legal needs, transportation, educational needs, and legal needs. Catholic Charities' Family Advocates are also supporting MNPS with chronic absenteeism of pre-K students. Family Advocates contact all families of pre-K students with chronic absences.
- During year two, MNPS put systems in place to provide vision and hearing screenings for all Pre-K students. Well Child is prioritizing screening students who are located in schools who are receiving PDG-E funding.
- Conexion Americas offers Parents as Partners, a training offered to parents to help pre-K parents reclaim their role as their child's first and most important teachers. During year two, Conexion Americas provided three PAP sessions, and graduated 38 parents. In addition to PAP, Conexion Americas also provided Cambridge ELC with a Family Engagement Coach to support EL families, and assist families with communication issues.
- In year two, six Family Involvement Specialists focused their efforts in utilizing a Dual Capacity Framework, based on the work of Karen Mapp, offering workshops, consultation, and training for both families and teaching staff at schools in all twelve clusters in the Metro Nashville Public Schools District. Through their efforts they seek to equip teachers and families to engage with each other and the school system in ways that allow for academic partnering to the service of student success.
- In year two, Family Involvement Specialists collectively offered 90 workshops for families with 964 participants. They have also played key roles in organizing and facilitating 53 parent events/ meetings with 1,980 participants. Beyond offering workshops at schools and community locations, Family Involvement Specialists provided family engagement opportunities through the dissemination of 'Take-Home Bags' which provide activities for families from Creative Curriculum along with supplies/books for the activities with ideas and resources to support learning at home. The 'Take Home Bags' can be 'checked-out' in a process similar to the check-out and return process for library books. During year two, there were 491 rotations of Take Home Bags.

## Selection Criteria (D)(4) from NIA

Describe the number and percent of Eligible Children served and the cost per slot.

The actual number of eligible children served in new preschool slots for year 2 in the Shelby County Consortium was 216 (out of 220 new slots) or 98% usage. Each of the new slots in the Shelby County Consortium costs \$8242. The total new preschool slots in the Shelby County Consortium in years one and two equals 880. Forty additional new slots that were targeted to open in year two will now be opening in year three along with the final 80 slots slated for year three. Shelby County Consortium has improved 1346 slots in year two of the grant, this is beyond the target number of 1000 slots described in the state's original application. Each of the improved slots in the Shelby County Consortium costs \$1248 per slot.

The actual number of eligible children served in new preschool slots for year two in MNPS Early Learning Centers is 124 (out of 140 new slots) or 89% usage. Each new slot in the Early Learning Center costs \$11023 per slot. The actual number of eligible children served in new preschool slots for year two in MNPS site based is 92 (out of a 100 new slots) or 92% usage. Each new slot at a site based costs \$8517. The total new preschool slots added in year one and two in MNPS equal 440. The actual number of eligible children served in improved preschool slots for year two in MNPS is 1917 at a cost of \$1523 per slot and the target number was 2380. The difference between the actual numbers and target numbers in MNPS are attributed to two factors, first to a district diversity goal to ensure racial, ethnic, cultural and socio-economic diversity in classrooms across the district, including pre-K. As such, some students enrolled in grant-funded enhanced preschool classrooms may not meet the eligibility requirements documented in this grant. Second, some children with IEPs were placed in classrooms without determining family income eligibility status. This will be corrected in year three by requiring all families registering for pre-K slots to provide economic documentation.

New classrooms are expected to adhere to the State Board of Education's Early Childhood Policy which addresses the requirement to use a state-approved comprehensive curriculum, to provide hands-on learning experiences, to be culturally and linguistically responsive to all students and families and to connect learning activities to the state's early learning developmental standards for four-year-olds. To meet these requirements the following expenses contribute to the cost per seat:

- Set-up of new classrooms equipping them with:
  - o Child-sized furnishings
  - o Technology
  - o Approved curriculum and materials
  - o Center/interest area materials
  - o Children's books
- Personnel costs: qualified teachers, teaching assistants, and family involvement specialist
- Professional development for teachers and teaching assistants
- Comprehensive services
- Contracts with Family Advocates

### **3. Collaborating with Each Subgrantee and Ensuring Strong Partnerships (Selection Criteria E of the application)**

Describe the extent to which the State has collaborated with each Subgrantee to ensure that each Subgrantee is effectively implementing High-Quality Preschool Programs (Selection Criteria E (1-9) of the application) and how the State ensures strong partnerships between each Subgrantee and LEAs or other Early Learning Providers, as appropriate.

The Tennessee Department of Education has worked diligently to build strong relationships and open communication with each district. Subgrantees submitted budgets and an electronic scope of work for approval in order to access grant funds through the state's electronic ePlan system. This plan allowed for access to funds as needed by the districts in order to meet all proposed grant activities, including the opening of 23 new classrooms in the fall of 2016. The eplan system assists the state in desktop monitoring subgrantees throughout the year. Districts document teaching assignments, teacher certification, budget changes, and teacher action plans that are required by the state. The PDG educational consultants monitor eplan for changes, maintain weekly contact with each districts' pre-K coordinating team, and in person district team meetings were held quarterly in both MNPS and the Shelby County Consortium.

The state developed a scope of work document in an effort to help districts track their progress and for the state to monitor this progress bi-annually for grant compliance. (see attached document in Grads360) The scope of work document, completed yearly, requires districts to describe and detail implementation plan for each activity funded through the grant, provide an evaluation strategy and outcome goals for each activity. The scope of work document is linked to a budget document that identifies the costs of the activities. The scope of work is approved by the state before funding is released and then monitored through the year for compliance. For year three the monitoring protocol will be strengthened to require more detail of specific services provided by the grant funding and actual data of families and children served. Monitoring of the scope of work will occur quarterly for year 3.

#### **Progress by Topic**

##### **Establishment of roles and responsibilities of the State and Subgrantee toward implementing the State's plan;**

In order to maximize efficiency and integration of the expansion program with existing state and local preschool programs, the roles and responsibilities associated with the implementation of this project plan closely follow those associated with implementation of the statewide Voluntary Pre-K program (VPK). Through these existing VPK roles and responsibilities, Tennessee has made clear its preference for local control and local accountability in carrying out the state's vision for early childhood education. Because of that preference, local communities are able to develop their own priorities around early childhood education, build coalitions, and engage stakeholders to ensure local priorities are met and plan for sustainability. In the process Shelby County Consortium and MNPS have developed and are moving toward ambitious goals of their own, taking a leading role in moving towards high-quality preschool for every child in their communities. Because both Subgrantees already have significant experience administering VPK programs and both recently committed and allocated new funding to their preschool programs, the state elected to delegate the allocation of new preschool classrooms and seats to local decision makers. Both Subgrantees have established their own committees to review applications for funding and allocated classrooms according to agreed-upon criteria. The state continues to provide program administration, monitoring, oversight, and technical assistance through the use of the eplan system, quarterly meeting with district coordinators, professional development for staff and classroom observations by state consultants

##### **Increasing organizational capacity and infrastructure of the Subgrantee to provide High-Quality Preschool Programs, either directly or indirectly through an Early Learning Provider(s);**

Tennessee's Office of Early Learning (OEL), established in 2005, currently administers the VPK program. Its responsibilities include reviewing applications and overseeing the application process, program administration, monitoring, data collection, technical assistance, training, and family literacy and health consultations. OEL is responsible for data collection and filing of all state and federal progress reports regarding all programs

administered through this office.

In the spirit of local ownership, both Shelby County Consortium and MNPS have carried out the expansion program through slightly different methods. The differentiated strategies take into account their existing education and early childhood infrastructures, the different stakeholders in each community, and the local investments in quality already underway in those communities. The state, through the Office of Early Learning at TDOE, oversees all grant funds; distributes expansion funds to Early Learning Providers according to the recommendations of each Subgrantee; collects and compiles all required student and classroom data to fulfill state, federal, and grant requirements; establishes standards for the responsible use of grant funds; and ensures that all Early Learning Programs receiving expansion funding are meeting those standards.

**Ensuring that each Subgrantee minimizes local administrative costs;**

Each Subgrantee submitted a budget including a line item for administrative costs. These budgets were reviewed and approved by the state department. Amendments must be made if changes in any line exceeds 15% or more of the original budget. The state's electronic system is set up so that funds cannot be drawn down if line item amounts do not align with the requests for payment. Amendments are encouraged to be held no more than twice during the grant period, approximately six months after the grant period begins and two to three months prior to the end of the grant period. In year 2 no major amendments were requested by any of the Subgrantees.

**Monitoring Early Learning Providers to ensure they are delivering High-Quality Preschool Programs;**

The Tennessee Department of Education already monitors preschool programs operated by school districts and works with the Department of Human Services and the Subgrantees to ensure classrooms located in DHS facilities meet the highest rating for quality as defined by the Stars Quality Rating and State Report Card. Monitors and providers are already well-versed in these quality metrics and stakeholders already had a clear set of expectations. Classrooms are monitored twice yearly unless further observations are necessary due to non-compliance of state rules and regulations. In year 1 & 2 Educational Consultants have observed in the majority of new expansion classrooms. Each visit is documented and shared with the subgrantees. Suggestions are provided as needed to classroom teachers and coaches. In year 2 all returning year one expansion teachers were observed using ECERS-R and results were shared and action plans were completed. These teachers were also observed in year 1 with ECERS-R and the overall score average increased by a point. The plan is to observe using ECERS-R year 2 new expansion classrooms in the fall of 2017.

**Coordination of plans related to assessments, data sharing, instructional tools, family engagement, cross-sector and comprehensive services efforts, professional development, and workforce and leadership development;**

Each school district has identified one or two point people through which all communication regarding the grant is channeled and they are responsible for coordinating the activities of their district. Some of the responsibilities of these people include:

- Identify terms regarding data sharing and tackle roadblocks to enhance the interoperability of data systems. This is done in conjunction with the input from their district's Office of Research, Assessment & Evaluation and the state and local Data Management Offices.
- Structure data sharing agreements with comprehensive community service providers to assess the quality of services and impact on student learning
- Collaboratively design summer professional development and trainings to be offered by the state and Subgrantees.

·Aggregate, review, and provide input on family engagement strategies based on findings from the annual family satisfaction survey.

**Delivery of High-Quality Preschool Programs to Eligible Children who may be in need of additional supports, such as:**

- Children with disabilities or developmental delays*
- English learners*

- *Children who reside on "Indian lands"*
- *Migrant children*
- *Homeless children*
- *Children in the child welfare system*
- *Children who reside in rural or tribal areas*
- *Children from military families*
- *Other children as identified by the State*

The data found in Table A.3(a) and Table A.3(b) identifies the very diverse population being served in our expansion preschool classrooms. Because the grant districts are located in very urban settings this accounts for the lack of any children from migrant families or those who reside on Indian lands. Additionally, since these Subgrantees are located in large urban cities they have access to many resources to meet the diverse needs of their population and the comprehensive services provided by the grant assist families in accessing these resources.

**Subgrantees will implement 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.**

The Subgrantees are required to document their process for enrollment and registration as well as provide documentation of family engagement activities and opportunities. Each district has many strategies already in place to reach families who might otherwise be overlooked. Some of the services available and provided by the Subgrantees available:

- Translation services
- Family engagement specialists who conduct workshops and formal outreach
- Shelby County offers a community celebration fair focused on preschool students where families can receive a variety of information about preschool, health and dental services, family support
- MNPS offers the Parent Ambassador Program, started by the Mayor's office and Metro Schools which pairs immigrant families with host families in Nashville

#### **4. Alignment Within a Birth Through Third Grade Continuum (Section F of the application)**

Describe progress the State has made for alignment within a birth through third grade continuum in activities for birth through age five programs ((F)(1)(a-b) in the NIA) and kindergarten through third grade ((F)(2)(a-d) in the NIA).

Last year, the Tennessee Department of Education refocused its mission and support for the importance of the early years and publicly recognized this time as foundational to the success of every child graduating from high school with the postsecondary knowledge and skills needed for college and career readiness. To do so, Early Foundations and Literacy was established as one of five state priorities in the state's strategic plan, *Tennessee Succeeds*, and the various groups who support this work were combined into the Office of Early Learning. This strategic focus has continued this year, with an intentional and more purposeful alignment to connect birth to five with Kindergarten to third grade and better support high quality instruction along the continuum, with the creation of a new division of Early Learning and Literacy (encompasses the Offices of Early Learning and Reading), and a new assistant commissioner role to lead the division. This shift occurred in November 2016.

Concurrent with this internal restructuring, Tennessee's Department of Education (DOE) and Department of

Human Services (DHS) have partnered to strengthen early learning opportunities for children in public and private childcare settings. Building on new rules and regulations adopted last year that require all childcare workers to have a minimum of six hours of professional development on early literacy, the DOE and DHS have identified 200 classrooms to participate in a pilot during the 2017-18 school year, whereby the required professional development is provided by the DOE (linked to the state's K-3 reading initiative) and supported with coaching activities throughout the year. Additionally, participating classrooms will be enriched with books and materials provided by the state's Books from Birth program. This work originated out of the Governor's Children's Cabinet, a group of individuals that represent a broad range of state organizations supporting children's health and education, and exemplifies the high priority and focus being placed on early childhood education.

The DOE has also been intentional in its efforts to improve the quality of instruction in its state-funded Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) program. Using the findings from the Vanderbilt study of pre-K efficacy, the state's funding application has been significantly revised to focus on structural, programmatic, and instructional indicators of high quality. This year's funds will be awarded to districts that demonstrate strong efforts to recruit and serve the targeted student population, implement strong instructional practices including appropriate use of time during the day, and provide teachers and teaching assistants with strong professional development and classroom supports.

To further support this work in VPK, the state will be instituting a student growth portfolio in pre-K and K in the 2017-18 school year. This portfolio will represent a collection of evidence demonstrating student growth throughout the year, will be scored by peers, and will constitute the 35% growth measure that is part of a teacher's annual summative evaluation score. This work is strategically structured to focus teachers' instructional practices on ensuring individual growth for all children towards mastery of the grade level standards, and provide opportunities for reflective practice and job-embedded professional development throughout the year.

A new full-time position has been hired in the Division of Early Learning and Literacy to provide high quality professional development to support these desired shifts in practice. Through collaboration with other divisions within the TDOE, three phases of training have been provided to districts statewide through Early Learning Model (ELM) training. Two additional phases are planned and will be delivered prior to the start of the new school year.

In addition to the work being led by the TDOE, all Subgrantees have strived to implement proposed continuum goals listed in the PDG application. Much of their work has been built on the foundation of collaboration across the continuum and providing opportunities for professional development for administrators and staff across age and grade levels.

### **1. Transitions for Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age Five**

- a) *How your efforts expanded families' choices or activities that facilitated or improved families' access to programs and supports in their own communities;*

As mentioned previously, the placement of expansion classrooms has been driven by a purposeful process that identifies community need for the targeted student population. This has resulted in greater access to high quality pre-K in both MNPS and the Shelby County Consortium.

Additionally, both Subgrantees are focused on providing access to comprehensive services. In MNPS all Pre-K Sites provide access to health screenings and family engagement support. Family Involvement Specialists and Family Advocates support families of children attending schools in some of the most culturally diverse areas of the city to assist them with

understanding availability of and access to resources for them and their children. In the Shelby County Consortium school districts, Porter Leath provides comprehensive services such as health screenings and family support to all families in the expansion classrooms, as well as previously existing classrooms that did not have these services available. Services are diverse to meet the needs of the families. Both Subgrantees offer an open registration so that families can register and identify the top 3-5 schools they are interested in having their child attend.

*(b) How the State is working to ensure that High-Quality Preschool Programs will not diminish services or increase costs to families for other programs serving children from birth through age five?*

Tennessee's plan for providing new high quality preschool seats was entirely funded with newly committed resources. There is an assumption that families who participate in this program may not currently be receiving any of these services and thus should not impact any existing services. Subgrantees are working in collaboration with community partners and Head Start grantees to determine areas of need across their districts and aiding in the identification of new pre-school seats.

The following are examples of collaboration and training activities that have occurred in year two by the Subgrantees in **birth through age five program activities**:

- Shelby County Schools established a collaboration with Porter-Leath on the opening of a state-of-the-art preschool and teacher training institute that will establish a continuum of early childhood education, from prenatal to age 5 and promote excellence for young children and their families.
- Shelby County Schools partners with Porter Leath to assist those parents enrolled in their Early Head Start program in transitioning into the Pre-K program smoothly.
- The Shelby County Schools Early Childhood Division and Porter Leath also partner with the Student Services Division to ensure families with students transitioning from Pre-K to Kindergarten know all of the necessary requirements for Kindergarten entry and are provided resources when needed.
- During year two, MNPS and NAAEYC collaborated, through a contract with Scholastic, to provide a full day training for community providers, placing emphasis on infants and toddlers. This training will strengthen the alignment from birth through Pre-K.
- MNPS Family Involvement Specialists (FIS) supported the birth to third grade alignment by inviting community agencies and childcare programs in their area to participate in trainings that were planned for the district pre-K teachers and families.

## **2. Transitions for Programs Serving Children from Kindergarten to Grade 3**

*(a) How the State will ensure that Eligible Children are well-prepared for kindergarten;*

In year two, the state is using PRI data to help us ensure that children who participate in the preschool

classrooms are well prepared for kindergarten. The individual student information gathered from PRI assessments will provide us with much needed data to identify individual student data, as well as professional development needs. Initially, the Kindergarten Entry Inventory (KEI) pilot was intended to give the state another data point to indicate readiness, however the KEI field test only involved a limited number of children in each Subgrantees kindergarten classrooms and did not provide usable data points (See summary on GPRA 1(C) question). The teacher's evaluation scores on ECERS-R will assist us with an understanding of the teacher's style of interaction with the students, as well as the level of quality of the classroom environment. The Narrative Record will also provide insight into the daily activities of the classroom and how the time is spent and the level of engagement of the students.

*(b) Efforts and activities to sustain the educational and developmental gains of Eligible Children:*

Collaboration between preschool and kindergarten teachers should be enhanced with the implementation of the student growth portfolios. As both groups of teachers learn to be purposeful and intentional in their instruction as it relates to the grade level standards, the opportunity to highlight the continuum of learning will be emphasized during professional development. Additionally, as the TDOE explores means of assessing pre-K quality and implements a KEI across the state, opportunities to compare and cross-reference new data will further this collaboration.

As previously mentioned, the Governor, the DOE and other child serving state departments launched a new "Read to Be Ready" initiative in February 2016, which focuses on supporting families, early care providers and teachers with understanding of research-based best practices to build strong foundational literacy skills in the early years. Currently only 43% of third grade students are reading on grade level. The goal through this initiative is to have 75% of third graders reading on grade level by the year 2025, and because the approach is an integrated one, it promises impact math scores as well. To date, 90 districts across the state are participating in this initiative, supported by 250+ highly trained reading coaches.

In the PDG districts, there are explicit transition activities for children moving from preschool programs into the kindergarten, and in these districts kindergarten is a full day program.

*(c) Additional steps taken to build upon or align programs:*

Tennessee has a set of early learning standards (TN ELDS) that are generally aligned with kindergarten standards. In December 2016, the state's kindergarten standards were revised and the DOE is beginning a process to revise the TN ELDS to ensure explicit alignment and consistent language and expectations. The DOE currently requires that a teacher possess a four year degree, a teaching license and an endorsement in pre-K. Our teacher licensure staff are revisiting the teacher prep program requirements to determine what adjustments, if any, need to be made to ensure teachers are prepared to teach after graduation. We have a data system for tracking students enrolled in our school districts but not one that connects students enrolled in a non-school based or administered program.

*(d) Family engagement strategies.*

Tennessee offers many resources to help families become involved in their child's learning at home and at school. The Imagination Library, sometimes called the Governor's Books from Birth program, offer one free book a month, from the month the child is born until he turns five, to every child in Tennessee. Many of the books offer suggestions on questions or comments to make with children about the book. The First Lady of Tennessee developed a program called *Read for Twenty* which encourages families to read to their children at least 20 minutes a day. A state sponsored website, KidsCentralTN.org, offers resources to families focused on education, development and health. The new Read to Be Ready initiative also provides a link for connecting the community to support children's love and engagement in reading.

The following are examples of collaboration and training activities that have occurred in year two by the Subgrantees in **Kindergarten through third grade:**

- All Subgrantees have schools participating in the Read to be Ready Initiative to ensure third grade reading proficiency.
- One district developed an Early Childhood Task Force (pre-k - third grade) to determine assessment alignment, strategies for school leaders around early grades, shared PD, and school cultures
- Pre-K programs based in public schools participated with all academic and extra-curricular activities, for example: Literacy Night, Family Math and ELA planning night, and in some, community child care programs were invited to participate in these activities as well.
- Ongoing professional development and professional learning communities were established across grade levels to develop learning progression plans, intentionally align curricula in pre-k that models the same instruction strategies as the district's K-3 curriculum to expose the students to foundational skills that will be reinforced and further developed in kindergarten through third grade.
- One district offered Pre-K - 4th grade coaches the opportunity to attend a vertical collaborative coaches' meetings. Focusing on coaching strategies, developmentally appropriate practice, and reinforcement of the district's literacy initiatives, the coaches worked together to set professional goals to align coaching practice.
- As social-emotional support for students in Pre-K classrooms, the Pyramid Model has traditionally been a professional development session led by the DOE for Pre-K teachers. With the goal of strengthening the Pre-K through third grade continuum this year, a fall and a spring professional development session on the Pyramid Model was offered for K-2 educators and administrators.
- One Subgrantee has developed “summer transition bags” to prepare children for kindergarten through reading, math and other activities.

## Section A: Part C - Competitive Preference Priorities

### Competitive Preference Priority 1: Contributing Matching Funds (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe the progress the State has made on its credible plan for obtaining and using non-Federal matching funds to support the implementation of its ambitious and achievable plan during the grant period. For progress *not* made in this area, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period. Please describe any changes made to the data reported in **Table 7(a)**; explain if your *Year 2 Target* differs from the *Year 2 Actual*.

There are no discrepancies to report on the state's year two target matching funds and the year 2 actual matching funds. The county commission classrooms operating within the Shelby County Consortium school districts continue to be funded and operated as originally defined in the grant application as local match. The MNPS Early Learning Centers serve as local match as defined in the grant application. These centers have guided the districts' work and served as models, empowering the district to embed the constructivist approach in all pre-K classrooms, and establishing clear expectations, which have positively impacted principals, teachers, and students in grades Pre-K through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

### Competitive Preference Priority 2: Supporting the Continuum of Early Learning and Development (if included in the State's approved application).

Describe progress made in creating 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. For progress *not* made in these areas, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period.

Both MNPS and the school districts comprising the Shelby County Consortium are working diligently to not only provide a high quality pre-K program, but also strategies that can strength their program by looking at the experiences each student has prior to entering pre-K and the experiences they will have when entering the formal K-12 education system. In year two of the grant all districts have supported and strengthened areas of professional development for administrators and staff, transitions, before/after care and/or comprehensive services for families in need. These activities will be evaluated through the subgrantee contract with Peabody Research Institute with a yearend family survey and through professional development completion surveys.

Administrators of pre-K-3 classrooms are learning more about what quality pre-K looks like and how K-3 teachers can differentiate and support children at the diverse levels of development they bring with them into the school system. This is being supported through administrator training at the district level. For example, an early childhood guidance document connected to the state teacher evaluation has been developed to provide administrators with "look fors" developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood classrooms. Pre-K -3 Administrators have also been involved in professional development on topics of early childhood development, social emotional development and early literacy.

MNPS has opened pre- K professional development when space is available to community childcare programs and community partners. In addition they are planning a Kindergarten registration fair to invite community partners, feeder schools, and other community services to aid families in the transition and registration for kindergarten. MNPS has collaborated with Head Start and community childcare programs to strengthen the continuum work along with assisting in increasing enrollment of eligible students. MNPS has been able to add more before/after care spaces for pre-K families at a reduced cost as part of the year two scope of work.

The Shelby County Consortium is intentionally aligning curricula in pre-K that models the same instructional strategies as the district's K-3 curriculum to expose the students to foundational skills that will be reinforced and further developed in kindergarten through third grade. One district is

working with local community agencies, other school districts, and philanthropies to implement a Shelby County Early Childhood Plan that includes awareness to parents regarding resources and services for children birth to third grade, collaboration with child care centers and pre-K programs, effective staff development, and quality comprehensive services.

For all of the Subgrantees, the provision of comprehensive services required in the grant plays a vital role to support children's educational success and strengthening the learning and development across the continuum.

**Competitive Preference Priority 3: Creating New High Quality State Preschool Slots (if included in the State's approved application).**

Describe progress made in using at least 50% of the State's 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. For progress *not* made in this area, please describe the State's strategies to ensure that measurable progress will be made by the end of the grant period.

A review of the spreadsheet submitted with our application, shows that over the four year grant period, 70% of our total grant request will create 1440 new state preschool program seats. This year 240 and 220 new seats were added in the MNPS and the Shelby County Consortium respectively. This adds to the additional 860 new seats opened in the first year of the grant, for a total 1320 seats. 120 more seats will be added in year three.

## Section B: Budget Information

### Budget and Sustainability (Section G in the application)

1. Please provide a brief explanation of any discrepancies between the State's approved budget and its total expenditures for the reporting year. Explain carry-over funds that have not been expended or obligated from January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016.

There are no changes to the approved budget and total expenditures for the reporting year. Funding for year two was approved and allocated in June 2016 with the budget year following the state budget year of July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017. Expenditures (draw down by Subgrantees) continue to be monitored and it expected to be on target with carry over funds from year one funds and year two funds to be expended or obligated by June 30, 2017.

2. Please describe any substantive changes that you anticipate to the State's Preschool Development Grant budget in the upcoming fiscal year (January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017).

At this time the state does not anticipate any substantive changes to our budget from the one submitted.

3. Describe the State's progress on its plan for sustainability at the end of the grant period 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.

The Tennessee department of education along with all of the Subgrantee districts remain focused on continued planning for high quality pre-K classrooms beyond the four year grant period. The department has included early foundations as a major piece of its strategic plan to ensure all students are postsecondary and career ready when graduating high school. The governor and the department of education and other child serving state departments continue to support the "Read to Be Ready" initiative which also focuses on supporting families', early care providers' and teachers' understanding of research based best practices to build the foundational skills important necessary for conventional reading and writing. There is also a renewed interest by private businesses, philanthropic organizations, chambers of commerce and even some legislators to invest in practices to ensure quality early learning experiences are available and that the department is working to hold all programs to high quality standards. Individual grantees report the following initial sustainability plans:

- All districts are actively seeking philanthropic and foundation grants to sustain high quality preschool programs.
- Shelby County Consortium is partnering with People First (initiator of the Shelby County Early Childhood Plan) to pursue local government, organizations and philanthropic funds to sustain Pre-K across Shelby County.
- Collaborating and leveraging Head Start funds to maintain and possibly expand access to high quality programs

4. Please provide a brief explanation of any discrepancies, if any, between the Subrecipients' approved budgets and their total expenditures for the reporting year. Explain carry-over funds that have not been expended or obligated from January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016.

The discrepancies in the proposed budget versus the actual expenditures are mainly due to fact that the state operates on a fiscal year instead of a calendar year. Activities described in the year two scope of work will continue through June 30, 2017. These include:

- Professional development training for administrators and classroom staff;
- Regional Summit in each area of the state which are planned for June 2017;
- Continuation of classroom observations and collection of child assessment data for evaluation of progress of improving quality across districts;
- A family survey assessing effectiveness of comprehensive services;
- Planning and development of year three scope of work by state and Subgrantees;
- Technical assistance including ongoing travel to visit classrooms, and other opportunities to learn from our technical assistance partners and other states;
- Salaries of staff in the department of education as well staff from grantees and contractual agreements;
- Ongoing implementation of comprehensive services.

All planned projects are meeting benchmarks for completion by June 30, 2017.