



October 15, 2011

The Honorable Arne Duncan  
Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Duncan and Secretary Sebelius:

Minnesota's best hope for the future rests on the promises we make to our children today. We are proud to submit a bold Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge application that represents our state's strong commitment to ensuring equitable opportunities for high quality early learning for every child.

For decades Minnesota has been an education leader. Sustaining our future competitive edge will rely on investments we make in early learning now, especially for those children who have been historically underserved. Minnesota's Race to the Top application embodies our state's collective sense of urgency to provide expanded opportunities for high quality early learning experiences that will improve outcomes for children, especially those with the highest needs.

Our path forward does not stop today. In the months leading up to this application, Governor Dayton demonstrated his unwavering commitment to align public and private efforts to close achievement gaps and opportunity gaps. He created a Children's Cabinet comprised of Commissioner of Health Ed Ehlinger, Commissioner of Human Services Lucinda Jesson and myself, charged with coordinating state agency work that impacts Minnesota children. Simultaneously, he appointed 22 citizens and early childhood advocates to the Early Learning Council, responsible for advising the Governor, the Children's Cabinet and the Legislature on strategies for increasing access to high quality state and federal early childhood care and preschool educational programs. Additionally, the Minnesota Department of Education recently opened a new Office of Early Learning to provide better support, coordination and direction to the educators and child care providers vital to the lives of our children.

Minnesotans are known for their common sense approach to problem solving, for working together to get things done and for emerging from adversity to shape a stronger future for all who call the North Star State home. The vision put forth in this document reflects the input of

thousands of passionate stakeholders who helped forge a clear path to accelerate our efforts, measure our progress and share proven best practices that will improve outcomes by providing more children with access to high quality early learning opportunities.

We know - and research has proven - that dollar for dollar, early childhood investments give us the greatest return on investment. Beyond the valuable economic returns, access to high quality early care and education opens the door to the possibility that every child in Minnesota, regardless of geography, race or economic circumstance, can reach their highest potential. That vision - for our children, our schools and our state - is one we can all stand proudly behind.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brenda Cassellius". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Brenda Cassellius  
Commissioner

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



U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202  
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Expiration Date: 02/29/2012  
Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1894-0013. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 640 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (§§14005 and 14006, Division A, of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, as amended by P.L. 112- 10). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20210-4537 or email [ICDocketMgr@ed.gov](mailto:ICDocketMgr@ed.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number 1894-0013. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to: Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge, Implementation Support Unit, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., S.W., Room 7E208, Washington, DC 20202-3118

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

**Note to Reviewers: Extraneous text was removed from the application file for the ease of the reader.**

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

**Note to reviewers: Signed Assurances and Certifications Provided in Separate PDF and hard copy.**

Legal Name of Applicant (Office of the Governor):  Mark Dayton	Applicant's Mailing Address: Office of the Governor 130 State Capitol 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. St. Paul, MN 55155
Employer Identification Number: 41-6007162	Organizational DUNS: 933561318
Lead Agency: Minnesota Department of Education Contact Name: Commissioner Brenda Cassellius (Single point of contact for communication)	Lead Agency Contact Phone: 651-582-8204  Lead Agency Contact Email Address: Brenda.cassellius@state.mn.us
Required Applicant Signatures <i>(Must include signatures from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency. Insert additional signature blocks as needed below. To simplify the process, signatories may sign on separate Application Assurance forms.):</i>	
To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct. I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:	
Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): Governor Mark Dayton	Telephone: 651-201-3400
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor:	Date:
Lead Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Commissioner Brenda Cassellius, Ed.D.	Agency Name: Department of Education
Signature of Lead Agency Authorized Representative:	Date:
Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Commissioner Edward Ehlinger, MD, MSPH	Agency Name: Department of Health
Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative:	Date:
Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Commissioner Lucinda Jesson, J.D.	Agency Name: Department of Human Services

**State Attorney General Certification**

**Note to reviewers: Signed Assurances and Certifications Provided in Separate PDF and hard copy.**

<p>State Attorney General or Authorized Representative of the Attorney General Certification</p> <p>I certify that the State’s description of, and statements and conclusions in its application concerning, State law, statute, and regulation are complete and accurate, and constitute a reasonable interpretation of State law, statute, and regulation:</p>	
<p>State Attorney General or Authorized Representative of the Attorney General (Printed Name):</p> <p>James Patrick Barone</p>	<p>Telephone:</p> <p>651-757-1203</p>
<p>Signature of the State Attorney General or Authorized Representative of the Attorney General :</p>	<p>Date:</p>

### **Accountability, Transparency, and Reporting Assurances**

**Note to reviewers: Signed Assurances and Certifications Provided in Separate PDF and hard copy.**

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

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

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name):	
Governor Mark Dayton	
Signature:	Date:

## V. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

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

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

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

List of Participating State Agencies:

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

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

<b>Participating State Agency Name (* for Lead Agency)</b>	<b>MOU Location in Application</b>	<b>Funds/Program(s) administered by the Participating State Agency</b>
Department of Education	MOU Appendix 1, 2 and 3	Section 619 of Part B of IDEA and Part C of IDEA State Funded Preschool (School Readiness) Title I of ESEA Head Start State Collaboration Grant State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education & Care School Readiness Study Early Childhood Family Education Educate Parents Partnership Early Childhood Screening Program State Head Start
Department of Human Services	MOU Appendix 1	Child Care Development Fund Child Care Licensing
Department of Health	MOU Appendix 2	MIECHV Home Visiting Title V Maternal and Child Care Block Grant



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

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

Yes

No

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

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

Yes

No

## VI. SELECTION CRITERIA

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

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

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

#### **A. Successful State Systems**

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

The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's—

- (a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;
- (b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;
- (c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and
- (d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.

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

Evidence for (A)(1):

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

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

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

*“Minnesota’s future success depends upon building an education system that gives every child the chance to succeed. By starting early we can lay a strong foundation to ensure every learner has the tools to excel in the classroom, in our communities, and in life.”* –Governor Mark Dayton

A baby born in Minnesota today should benefit from the tremendous support that has been built over many years of focus on creating a high-quality early learning and development system. Too often, though, a baby’s ability to reach her full potential still depends upon her parents’ income and the community into which she happens to be born. Minnesota’s Early Learning Challenge Plan (State Plan) seeks to build a lasting bridge between the state’s many assets and our goal of having every child fully prepared for success in kindergarten and beyond, regardless of income, geography, special needs, or any other challenge.

Since the Department of Education began measuring the school readiness of Minnesota’s children at kindergarten entry in 2002, results have consistently shown that only about half enter the kindergarten door fully prepared across the multiple domains that are critical for school success (Minnesota Department of Education, 2003-2010). Strategic public and private Early Learning and Development (ELD) initiatives have demonstrated that we can improve the school readiness of Children with High Needs. Our challenge now is to take the lessons learned through these initiatives and bring them to scale. This application presents Minnesota’s State Plan to knit together a series of sustainable investments into one coherent, cost-effective statewide ELD system. These investments focus on improving ELD Program quality and accountability, building up the quality of our workforce, and creating an infrastructure at the state and local level—all of which are designed to eliminate the unacceptable disparities that exist for Children with High Needs, particularly those living in poverty, whether in urban or rural areas or on Indian Lands. Variations across populations and geography drive Minnesota’s State Plan, strengthening the statewide early childhood system that expects the same school readiness for all children while recognizing that local variation in delivery mechanisms should be respected in order to maximize statewide support in reaching this goal.

To provide context for the State Plan, this proposal begins with an overview of Minnesota’s past and current commitment to early learning and development: financial investments, participation of Children with High Needs in ELD Programs, policies and practices,

and the existing building blocks that will come together to form the foundation of Minnesota's bridge to school readiness.

## **FINANCIAL INVESTMENT IN EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS—A1a**

Minnesota's investments in ELD Programs are deep, wide-ranging, and innovative. They encompass initiatives such as the launch of the nationally renowned Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) parent education program in 1974, a long history of state investment in Head Start, and state investments in school-based pre-kindergarten (School Readiness) programs. As presented in Table A1-4, Minnesota's general fund spending on ELD, in combination with the state commitments of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds to early childhood, increased from approximately \$304 million in SFY2007 to \$354 in SFY2011, an increase of 16% (largely from increasing services to children with special needs). This is especially impressive in the context of the worst economic recession in recent history.

In each year from SFY2007-2011, Minnesota's contribution to the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) exceeded the state match requirement. In addition to the investment of state funds, Minnesota transferred Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to CCDF in all years, as presented in Table A1-5. In addition to state funding for children with special needs, Child Care Development Fund match, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families transfer, Minnesota invests State General Funds in supplemental Head Start and Early Head Start and provides funding to school districts to support pre-kindergarten programs (the "School Readiness" program), Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), and Early Childhood Screening.

One ELD financing tool that Minnesota has only begun to tap is the state's \$159 million in Title I funding. These funds are awarded to districts through a combination of formula calculations and district-level decisions, with districts deciding how to allocate those funds to individual schools and grade levels in order to improve the academic achievement of Children with High Needs. Currently, just four of Minnesota's 339 school districts use Title I funds to serve preschool-aged children.

Minnesota is serious about implementing and sustaining a continuous system of supports through ELD and into K-12 to improve outcomes for children. For example, during the 2011 Legislative Session, Minnesota avoided cuts to special education and increased the state's per-

pupil funding by \$50/student for each year of the biennium, the first real increase school districts have received for many years. Minnesota is also seeking a No Child Left Behind waiver that would allow districts more flexibility to direct federal funding toward early learning programs.

Although state investments are significant, they do not yet result in meeting all children's school readiness needs. Minnesota's investment is relative to a population of young children (birth to age five) in which 33% are low-income (<200%FPR), 4% have special needs, 8% are English learners speaking more than 145 languages and dialects at home, 1% live on Indian Lands, 4% are homeless, and 0.5% are in foster care (see Table A1-2). Another demographic issue informing this plan is that 37% of Minnesota children live in rural areas (i.e., not in the Twin Cities Metro Area counties or in Greater Minnesota cities with population of 20,000 or more). While many of the state's investments are distributed at the county or school district level based on number of Children with High Needs, the state's uneven population distribution results in significant variation in actual amount of funding available at the community level, with rural areas often receiving allocations that are inadequate to fully fund high-quality ELD Programs.

#### **PARTICIPATION IN EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS—A1b**

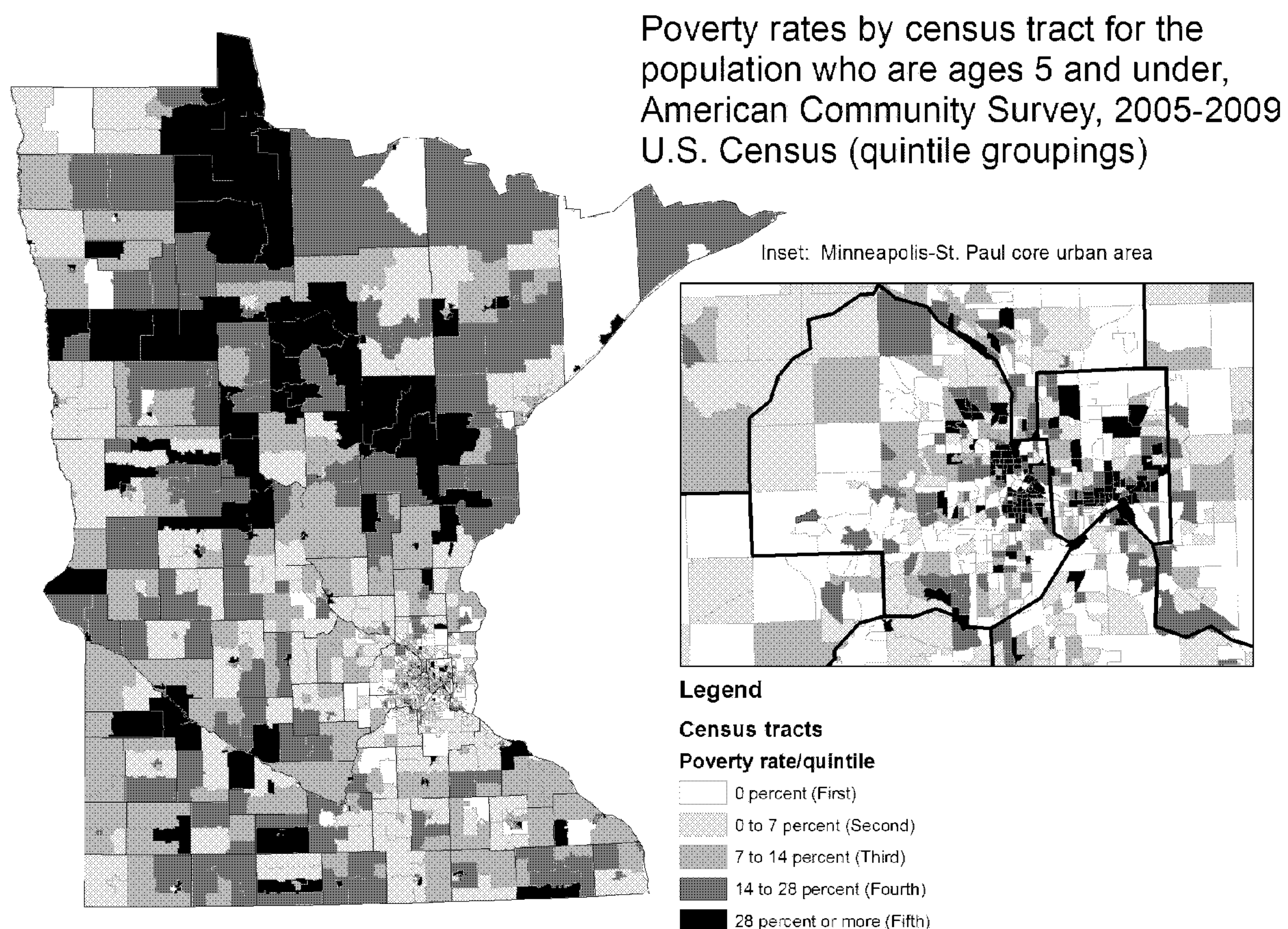
Approximately 427,000 children birth to kindergarten entry live in Minnesota. One-third of these children live in low-income families. Minnesota has been particularly hard hit by inequality in economic growth, with child poverty increasing 56% since 2000, compared to an 18% increase nationwide (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011a). Minnesota has been intentional about creating a network of services for Children with High Needs, and many of those children are accessing one or more of the programs for which they are eligible (see Table A1-3). One of Minnesota's challenges, though, is the lack of ability to track child-level data about all the programs in which a child or family participate before kindergarten entry, and how participation impacts the child's school readiness and later school success.

From 2007 to 2010, Minnesota increased the number of Children with High Needs participating in most Early Learning and Development Programs. The size of these increases varied considerably. Funding for Special Education programs for children age three to kindergarten entry increased by 174%. The number of children accessing most programs increased: Early Childhood Screening; state-funded preschool; programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619; programs receiving CCDF funds; and Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education. At the same time, Head Start and Early Head Start saw a slight

decrease, with participation falling by 1.6% due to increased cost per child served for some Head Start programs.

Minnesota is a state in which significant variations appear when one looks beyond statewide averages. These variations present particular challenges both in allocating resources and in building an infrastructure of services to support all young children and their families. Of particular relevance is the deep concentration of poverty in some areas, the vastly different densities of population across a state spanning more than 85,000 square miles (the 12<sup>th</sup> largest in the country), and the wide and persistent disparities in outcomes for children. These variations drive our strategic vision for the place-based initiatives in this State Plan (described in Selection Criteria A2 and B4).

The map below (Figure A-1) illustrates the variation in poverty rates for children ages 0-5. (Note that this map identifies poverty rates relative to 100% FPG; the low-income designation above and in Table A1-1 is 200% FPG.) Poverty rates for young children vary widely across the state, from 3.5% in Scott County to 41.1% in Nobles County. Three of Minnesota's communities with the highest concentrations of poverty are Promise Neighborhood applicants: North Minneapolis, the Frogtown neighborhood in Saint Paul, and the White Earth reservation. Those and other communities with deeply concentrated poverty face challenges that are not apparent when simply looking at overall Minnesota poverty rates. While low-income communities in the Metro area often have services available, many families lack access to those services at the time and in the place that would most benefit their children. In Greater Minnesota (the vast, mostly rural area outside the Twin Cities Metro area), services are much more tightly coordinated, but there too, families face barriers and often simply do not have access to adequate services and resources to meet their needs. Across the state, families of Children with High Needs face economic challenges but also face additional related challenges, such as high levels of serious family crisis, suicides, homelessness, unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse, out-of-home placements, and transportation barriers. These areas of concentrated poverty are scattered throughout the state, posing resource and logistical challenges to delivering effective services.

**Figure A-1. Poverty Rates by Census Tract for Population Age 0-5**

*Figure A-1.* Map of the state of Minnesota showing distribution of children under the age of six living in poverty, by county, from 2005-2009. Copyright 2011, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

Another challenge to building a strong ELD infrastructure in Minnesota is the variation in overall population density. In early childhood, one of the most relevant consequences of this varied density is that the vast majority of ELD services outside the Twin Cities Metro area are delivered through home-based providers who serve relatively small numbers of children. To illustrate, of the 961 child care centers in Minnesota, 67% are concentrated in the seven-county Twin Cities Metro Area. Conversely, of the 11,043 licensed family child care programs statewide, 61% are located in Greater Minnesota (NACCRRAware, 2011).

Building a strong infrastructure of high-quality programs with well-trained staff is challenging when most providers in a community are small, home-based programs, often with



just one adult responsible for caring for children all day, every day. This leaves little time for training, participation in the Parent Aware Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, or any other quality-building efforts. In addition, when infrastructure supports are allocated on a per child basis, even communities with deep poverty struggle to patch together adequate resources to address pressing needs when the total number of children is relatively small. To illustrate, the local Child Care Resource and Referral agency serving Minnesota Region 5, which spans five counties in north-central Minnesota, has less than one full time employee serving 356 licensed family child care providers, an equal number of legally unlicensed Family, Friend, and Neighbor programs, 17 centers, 15 preschools, and 11 school-age care programs. By state statute, the agency has the responsibility of providing one-on-one support for these child care professionals by providing the latest education and tools needed to offer the best possible care—a serious challenge in an area with such dispersed populations and programs.

In some Greater Minnesota communities such as Itasca County, ELD stakeholders have found ways to leverage the strong connections and manageable scale inherent in smaller communities, bringing together community partners, programs, and funding streams to create a unique service delivery model to meet the needs of young children in their community. (For more information on Itasca County, see B4 and Priority 5.)

The third, and most troubling, variation masked by Minnesota's relatively positive statewide data is the fact that Minnesota has long experienced some of the most staggering racial disparities in the country, a trend that is both persistent and wide ranging. In 2009 in Minnesota, 47% of Black children lived below 100% of the Federal Poverty Rate, compared to 8% of White children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009). The poverty rate for Black children is the fifth highest in the country, and even more troubling, it represents an increase of more than 10 percentage points from 2008. Minnesota also has the highest rate of Asian children living in poverty (22%) in the United States. In addition, one-third of Hispanic children and almost 40% of American Indian children in the state live in poverty. The disparities persist across a number of indicators, including the school readiness we mean to address through this State Plan.

The Minnesota School Readiness Study has been assessing annual kindergarten readiness levels since 2002. A recent validation study conducted by Dr. Arthur Reynolds at the University of Minnesota Human Capital Research Collaborative identified that children reaching 75% of total possible points on the assessment are more likely to meet or exceed Grade 3 Reading and

Math levels on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment. Examining the 2011 cohort, the study found household income, parent education level, and gender to be statistically significant factors in disparities in reaching the 75% mark (for more information, see E1).

These disparities are most clearly illustrated by Minnesota's academic achievement gap between White students and students of color. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, Minnesota's achievement gaps between fourth grade White and Black, and White and Hispanic students, are the highest in the nation. The situation is not much better in math, where the eighth grade White-Black achievement gap ranks 38<sup>th</sup> in the nation, and the eighth grade White-Hispanic achievement gap ranks 39<sup>th</sup>. Minnesota's statewide annual assessments show that disparities in income also have a major effect on student achievement. In math, just 48% of students qualifying for free and reduced price lunch were measured as proficient in 2011, compared to 65% of all students statewide. The numbers are similar for reading, where 56% of students qualifying for free and reduced price lunch were measured as proficient, compared to 73% for all students statewide. These trends are reflected in much lower graduation rates for minority students than their White counterparts. While 95% of White students graduated in 2009, just 78% of Black students, 76% of Hispanic students, and 69% of American Indian students graduated.

### **LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND PRACTICES—A1c**

Minnesota has been intentional over many years in creating and implementing public policy to support early learning and development, with an ever-increasing focus on serving children and families who are low income, are English learners, are homeless, or have children with disabilities. This focus is sharpened by resource constraints but also by the clear understanding that the highest return on public investments is only realized when Children with High Needs have access to the highest quality ELD Programs (Grunewald & Rolnick, 2003). The section below highlights some of Minnesota's key laws, policies and practices, organized into the Early Learning Challenge elements: Successful State Systems; High-Quality, Accountable Programs; Promoting ELD Outcomes for Children; Great Early Childhood Education Workforce; and Measuring Outcomes and Progress. This section highlights key public policies, and a more thorough description of how these and other policies form the building blocks for this State Plan may be found in the next section and in the Appendix (Appendix 1).

Several key pieces of legislation form the governance foundation for a Successful State System. In 2008, the Minnesota Legislature passed a bill (Minnesota Statutes section 124D.141, subdivision 1) to establish the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care, as mandated by the federal Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007. In 2010, that law was amended to establish a Task Force to make specific recommendations for establishing a state Office of Early Learning (Minnesota Statutes section 124D.141, subdivision 2). A Task Force was formed and supported through a public-private partnership. Based on the Task Force's recommendations, the Minnesota Office of Early Learning (OEL) was established in fall 2011, with Dr. Karen Cadigan appointed as Director. The OEL is charged with coordinating policy, resources, and practices across the three state agencies with primary responsibility for serving young children—the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services—with lead responsibility for ELD Programs placed in the Department of Education. In addition, Governor Dayton reinstated the Children's Cabinet (including Commissioners of Health, Human Services, and Education) when he took office in 2011.

The key statutes implementing High-Quality, Accountable Programs include those that establish Minnesota's school-based pre-kindergarten program ("School Readiness") (Minnesota Statutes sections 124D.15-124D.16), Minnesota's Head Start program (Minnesota Statutes sections 119A.50-119A.545), and Minnesota's Child Care Assistance Program and child care quality supports (Minnesota Statutes chapter 119B, Minnesota Rules chapter 3400). Each of these laws has state general fund dollars appropriated to it (Table A1-4) and is designed to set baseline quality standards, support ELD Program quality, and target access to each program to children living in poverty or other Children with High Needs. In 2009, Minnesota adopted legislation to establish Minnesota's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System framework (Parent Aware; Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.142). Minnesota also has passed other innovative pieces of legislation to establish high-quality programs, including the School Readiness Connections pilot (Minnesota Statutes, section 119B.231), the Pre-Kindergarten Allowances pilot (2007 Minnesota Session Laws, chapter 147, article 2, section 62), and the recently-enacted Early Childhood Education Scholarship program (2011 Minnesota Special Session Laws, chapter 11, article 7, section 2).

Minnesota has a number of statutes and policies related to the Early Learning Challenge goal of Promoting ELD Outcomes for Children with High Needs. To establish services for

children with special needs, Minnesota law has created the Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities (Part C) program (Minnesota Statutes sections 125A.26-125A.48) and Preschool Special Education (Minnesota Statutes sections 125A.01-125A.25). To codify screening young children, Minnesota established the Early Childhood Screening program (Minnesota Statutes sections 121A.16-121A.17; 121A.19). Minnesota statutes enacted by the 2003 legislature require county boards to arrange or provide a mental health screening for high-risk children in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems (Minnesota Statutes section 245.4874).

Minnesota established key family engagement policy through the Early Childhood Family Education program (Minnesota Statutes sections 124D.13-124D.135) and the Educate Parents Partnership (Minnesota Statutes section 124D.129) that creates the Minnesota Parents Know parent resource website (<http://www.mnparentsknow.info>). Again, each of these programs has state appropriations, shown in Table A1-4.

To institute a framework for creating a Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, Minnesota launched an early childhood and school-age professional development system and related grants (2007 Minnesota Session Law chapter 147, article 2, section 56).

To facilitate Measuring Outcomes and Progress, the legislature appropriated funding beginning in 2002 and established in statute in 2006 the School Readiness Study (Minnesota Statutes section 124D.162).

#### **MINNESOTA'S BUILDING BLOCKS—A1d**

As evidenced by Tables A1-6 through A1-13 and as described throughout this application, Minnesota has a strong foundation of building blocks, which we will use to erect this State Plan. Minnesota's Early Learning and Development Standards (ELD Standards) have been in place since 2000 and are used statewide by ELD Programs (see Table A1-6 and C1). The Standards, along with other evidence-based program quality indicators, form the bedrock of Minnesota's parent-focused, research-based Parent Aware Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (see Section B), which includes Program Standards requiring assessment and curriculum that support and align with the ELD Standards. Using a strong existing set of programs and strategies (see Table A1-7), Minnesota plans to strengthen our infrastructure of evidence-based decision-making that will inform classroom and home-based practice, program service delivery, parent choice, and policies at the local and state levels (see C2).

The building blocks in Minnesota's professional development system include the Minnesota Core Competencies, which describe what Early Childhood Educators should be able to know and do, and a related Career Lattice and Registry that enable Early Childhood Educators to track their progress toward degrees and credentials that are aligned with the Core Competencies (see Selection Criteria D and Tables A1-10 and A1-11).

Both the Parent Aware TQRIS Program Standards and Core Competencies for Early Childhood Educators focus on family engagement and health promotion practices (see Tables A1-8 and A1-9). Another strong building block for parent engagement is the Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program offered through all Minnesota school districts. ECFE, Head Start, the Department of Health, and local communities all offer home visiting programs that provide another piece that can be used to support Children with High Needs throughout this Plan.

Since 2002, Minnesota's School Readiness Study has assessed the school readiness of Minnesota's children across all the Essential Domains of School Readiness, and a recent study (Reynolds, et al., 2011) validated that the results significantly and consistently predicted children's third grade reading and math scores and need for remedial services (see Selection E1 and Table A1-12). Finally, Minnesota has a number of existing data systems that house ELD data, and all Essential Data Elements are available across those systems (see Table A1-13 and Selection Criteria E2). These data systems are a strong building blocks for creation of a statewide data system that will provide ELD Programs, policymakers, and educators with actionable information on children's progress and outcomes.

Through dedication of funding and collaboration with researchers, Minnesota has demonstrated an enduring commitment to use evidence to inform the priorities, content, and targets of policies and programs. This tremendous local evidence base (highlighted in Appendix 2) provides an invaluable asset to Minnesota's efforts to develop a State Plan that reflects our best knowledge about our current early childhood system, the children and families we seek to serve, the effectiveness of various approaches, the workforce that supports these efforts, and the outcomes of this work.

In short, Minnesota has every necessary building block for a tremendously successful statewide ELD system. The State Plan presented on the following pages leverages those existing resources with Early Learning Challenge grant funds and private funds to bridge the gaps that prevent every young child in Minnesota from entering kindergarten fully prepared for success.

<b>Table (A)(1)-1: Children from Low-Income<sup>1</sup> families, by age</b>		
	<b>Number of children from Low-Income families in the state</b>	<b>Children from Low-Income families as a percentage of all children in the state</b>
<b>Infants under age 1</b>	24,274	35.2%
<b>Toddlers ages 1 through 2</b>	48,908	34.4%
<b>Preschoolers ages 3 to kindergarten entry</b>	69,293	32.0%
<b>Total number of children, birth to kindergarten entry, from low-income families</b>	142,553	33.4%

*Notes: Throughout this document, children prior to “Kindergarten entry” are defined as those ages 0-5 (including 5-year-olds). The total 0-5 population in Minnesota in 2010 was 427,426.*

*Source: Counts for the 0-5 population obtained from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 decennial census. Rate data obtained from Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) version of the U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey. Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010.*

<b>Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs</b>		
<b>The state should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations’ unique needs. The state will describe such activities throughout its application.</b>		
<b>Special populations: Children who . . .</b>	<b>Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the state who...</b>	<b>Percentage of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the state who...</b>
<b>Have disabilities or developmental delays<sup>2</sup></b>	16,069	3.8%
<b>Are English learners<sup>3</sup></b>	35,642	8.3%

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

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

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

<b>Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs</b>		
<b>The state should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations' unique needs. The state will describe such activities throughout its application.</b>		
<b>Special populations: Children who . . .</b>	<b>Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the state who...</b>	<b>Percentage of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the state who...</b>
<b>Reside on "Indian Lands"</b>	3,695	0.9%
<b>Are migrant<sup>4</sup></b>	Not Available	Not Available
<b>Are homeless<sup>5</sup></b>	17,680	4.1%
<b>Are in foster care</b>	2,147	0.5%
<b>Other as identified by the state</b> <b>Describe:</b>		

*Notes: Throughout this document, children prior to "Kindergarten entry" are defined through those ages 0-5 (including 5-year-olds). "Children who are English learners" were defined as children in families whose household head spoke another language other than English in the home and spoke English less than "very well." "Indian Lands" include the following Reservations and Off-Reservation Trust Land located within Minnesota: Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake, Lower Sioux, Mille Lacs, Chippewa, Prairie Island, Red Lake, Sandy Lake, Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux, Upper Sioux, and White Earth.*

*Sources:*

- Counts for the total 0-5 population obtained from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 decennial census.
- Counts for children with disabilities or developmental delays from Minnesota Department of Education child count data (12/1/2010)

*Rate data on English learners: Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) version of the U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey. Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010.*

*Counts for the 0-5 population residing on "Indian Lands" obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey.*

*Migrant data not available.*

*Homeless counts from Homeless Children and Their Families, 2009 Minnesota Homeless Study, Wilder*

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

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

<b>Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs</b> <b>The state should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations' unique needs. The state will describe such activities throughout its application.</b>		
<b>Special populations: Children who . . .</b>	<b>Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the state who...</b>	<b>Percentage of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the state who...</b>
<i>Research, May 2011.</i>  <i>Foster care data from Minnesota Department of Human Services and Minnesota Foster Care Report Card (11,300 x .19 under age 6)</i>		



<b>Table (A)(1)-3: Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, by age</b>				
<b>Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.</b>				
<b>Type of Early Learning and Development Program</b>	<b>Number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program, by age</b>			
	<b>Infants under age 1</b>	<b>Toddlers ages 1 through 2</b>	<b>Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>State-funded preschool</b> <i>Specify: School Readiness Program</i> <i>Data Source and Year: Annual Data Program Report, Early Learning Data System FY2010</i>	0	0	23,317	23,317
<b>Early Head Start and Head Start<sup>6</sup></b> <i>Data Source and Year: funded enrollment: Allocation Chart 2010</i>	Included in toddler count	1,978 (includes infants)	12,118	14,096
<b>Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619</b> <i>Data Source and Year: Minnesota Automated Reporting System (MARSS) December 1, 2010</i>	629	4,384	11,017	16,030
<b>Programs funded under Title I of ESEA</b> <i>Data Source and Year: Consolidated State Performance Report 2010</i>	Included in toddler count	268 (includes infants)	1,205	1,473

<p><b>Programs receiving funds from the state's CCDF program</b></p> <p><i>Data Source and Year: Minnesota Electronic Child Care System (MEC2), SFY2011 (average monthly), includes only children funded through Child Care Assistance</i></p>	1,881	7,671	11,623	21,175
<p><b>Other Early Childhood Mental Health Infrastructure Grant</b></p> <p><i>Specify: young children's mental health services on clinical services for the uninsured/underinsured</i></p> <p><i>Data Source and Year: Early Childhood Mental Health Infrastructure Grant data-September 8, 2011</i></p>	9	75	355	439
<p><b>Other Early Childhood Screening</b></p> <p><i>Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) 2010</i></p> <p>MDE estimates that 0.05% of children were screened more than 30 days after kindergarten entry.</p>	0	0	60,481	60,481
<p><b>Other Early Childhood Family Education (Parent Education program)</b></p> <p><i>Specify:</i></p> <p><i>Data Source and Year: Number of Children in Classes, Early Learning Data Systems Annual Report, SFY2010</i></p> <p><i>High Need Children are in families with incomes under \$40,000.</i></p> <p><i>NOTE: 18,957 are in mixed age classrooms.</i></p>	2,073	4,739	3,852	29,621

<b>Table (A)(1)-4: Historical data on funding for Early Learning and Development</b>					
<b>Type of investment</b>	<b>Funding for each of the Past 5 Fiscal Years</b>				
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Supplemental state spending on Early Head Start and Head Start<sup>7</sup></b>	19,110,183	19,520,750	20,679,140	20,100,000	20,100,000
<b>State-funded preschool</b> <i>Specify: School Readiness Program</i>	9,008,100	10,038,964	10,028,275	8,373,000	9,792,000
<b>State contributions to IDEA Part C</b>	19,433,716	22,129,902	26,045,045	26,639,390	30,163,979
<b>State contributions for special education and related services for children with disabilities, ages 3 through kindergarten entry</b>	101,682,827	112,209,923	121,562,494	122,727,593	124,568,148
<b>Total state contributions to CCDF<sup>8</sup></b> <i>Includes only state spending on Child Care Assistance Program.</i>	68,102,000	88,828,391	101,955,031	93,439,000	80,990,440
<b>State match to CCDF</b> <i>Exceeded/Met/Not Met (if exceeded, indicate amount by which match was exceeded)</i> <i>All CCDF match funds are from Minnesota's general fund.</i> <i>Calculated based on FFY match requirement. Equals total state contribution less match requirement amount. Dollar values include state Maintenance of Effort amount.</i> <i>State match to CCDF is included in Total State Contributions to CCDF (above row).</i>	Exceeded 40,434,840	Exceeded 60,490,744	Exceeded 73,527,453	Exceeded 64,492,606	Exceeded 52,710,490
<b>TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs<sup>9</sup></b>	62,361,000	28,557,000	31,123,000	26,561,261	55,041,000

<b>Table (A)(1)-4: Historical data on funding for Early Learning and Development</b>					
<b>Type of investment</b>	<b>Funding for each of the Past 5 Fiscal Years</b>				
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>Other state contributions</b> Early Childhood Mental Health Infrastructure Grant <i>Specify: young children's mental health services on clinical services for the uninsured/underinsured</i> <i>Young Children's mental health services was a 3-year grant; here funding is evenly divided across years.</i>	\$0	\$0	426,456	426,456	426,456
<b>Other state contributions</b> <i>Specify: Early Childhood Family Education</i>	17,963,627	21,439,980	30,201,604	21,895,678	21,177,000
<b>Other state contributions</b> <i>Specify: Early Childhood Screening</i>	2,474,550	2,472,150	3,459,055	3,492,135	3,434,000
<b>Other state contributions</b> <i>Specify: TANF expenditures on Home Visiting</i>	4,132,966	6,841,324	9,151,108	7,784,044	8,451,503
<b>Total state contributions:</b>	304,268,969	312,038,384	354,631,208	331,438,557	354,144,526
<p><i>[Enter text here to indicate data source and clarify or explain any of these data, including the state's fiscal year end date. Include 2011 if data are available.]</i></p> <p><i>Based on State Fiscal Year (SFY). Minnesota's SFY runs July 1-June 30.</i></p>					

<b>Table (A)(1)-5: Historical data on the participation of Children with High Needs in Early Learning and Development Programs in the state</b>					
<b>Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.</b>					
<b>Type of Early Learning and Development Program</b>	<b>Total number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years<sup>10</sup></b>				
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009<sup>11</sup></b>	<b>2010<sup>17</sup></b>	<b>2011<sup>17</sup></b>
<b>State-funded preschool</b> <i>(Annual Program Report 2010 Early Learning Data System)</i> <i>Specify: School Readiness Program</i>	20,508	20,927	20,325	23,317	NA
<b>Early Head Start and Head Start<sup>12</sup></b> <i>(funded enrollment: Allocation chart)</i>	14,321	14,415	14,241	14,096	N/A
<b>Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619</b> <i>(Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) December 1)</i>	14,433	15,141	15,531	16,030	NA
<b>Programs funded under Title I of ESEA</b> <i>(total number of children who receive Title I services annually, as reported in the Consolidated State Performance Report)</i>	538	800	1,464	1,473	NA
<b>Programs receiving CCDF funds</b> <i>(average monthly served)</i> *Estimated from ACF-801 Sample Data	17,761*	18,335*	18,751*	20,274	21,175
<b>Other Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)</b> <i>Describe: Parent Education Program, Families earning under \$40,000/year are reflected here.</i> <i>Annual Program Date Report, 2010.</i>	27,767	28,738	28,987	29,621	NA
<b>Other Early Childhood Screening</b>  <i>Describe:</i> Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARRS) 2010  MDE estimates that 0.05% of children were screened more than 30 days after kindergarten entry.	59,752	61,721	60,217	60,481	NA
<b>Other Early Childhood Mental Health Infrastructure Grant</b>	NA	NA	114	439	NA

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

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

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Total number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years <sup>10</sup>				
	2007	2008	2009 <sup>11</sup>	2010 <sup>17</sup>	2011 <sup>17</sup>
Describe: young children’s mental health services on clinical services for the uninsured/underinsured					
[Enter text here to indicate data source and clarify or explain any of these data if needed. Include 2011 if data are available. The final column of data should match that reported in Table (A)(1)-3.]					
SFY11 participation statistics have not been compiled for most programs.					

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

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

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

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

Types of programs or systems	Elements of Comprehensive Assessment System			
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental	Measures of Quality of Adult-Child

			Quality	Interaction
<b>State-funded preschool:</b> School readiness program and state-funded Head Start	X	X	X	
Early Head Start and Head Start	X	X	X	X
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	X	X		
Programs funded under Part B, 619	X	X	Some use <i>Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool</i> —scaling across state	Some use <i>Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool</i> —scaling across state
Programs receiving CCDF funds	Participants in Parent Aware QRIS are required to give families information about screening  After January 2012 programs receiving CCDF funds are required to have a new level of training which includes awareness about screening	Minnesota licensing regulations for child care centers, but not for family child care, require that the status of children’s intellectual, physical, social and emotional development be reported during parent conferences. There is no direction regarding the assessment process.  Participants in the MN QRIS, Parent Aware, are required to use authentic child	The Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) are used as the basis for a self-assessment of environmental quality in Parent Aware QRIS and the related Building Quality initiative.	The Classroom Assessment Scoring System is currently used in the Parent Aware QRIS and the related Building Quality Initiative to assess the quality of adult-child Interactions

		observation strategies and approved child assessment tools, dependent upon star level requirements.		
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements	X	X	X	X
State licensing requirements		<p>Minnesota licensing regulations for child care centers, but not for family child care, require that the status of children's intellectual, physical, social and emotional development be reported during parent conferences. There is no direction regarding the assessment process.</p> <p>Participants in the MN QRIS, Parent Aware, are required to use authentic child observation strategies and approved child assessment tools,</p>		



		dependent upon star level requirements.		
Family Home Visiting	X			Many use the <i>Parent Child Interaction Teaching &amp; Feeding Scale</i>

<b>Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the state</b>					
<i>Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.</i>					
Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other
State-funded preschool <i>Specify</i>	X	X	X	X	
Early Head Start and Head Start	X	X	X	X	
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	X	X	X	X	
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	X	X	X	X	
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	X	X	X	X	
Programs receiving CCDF funds	X				

<b>Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the state</b>					
<i>Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.</i>					
<b>Types of Programs or Systems</b>	<b>Elements of high-quality health promotion practices</b>				
	<b>Health and safety requirements</b>	<b>Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up</b>	<b>Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits</b>	<b>Health literacy</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements</b> <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>					
<b>Tier 1</b>	X	X			
<b>Tier 2</b>	X	X			
<b>Tier 3 &amp; 4 (determined by points)</b>	X	X	X		
<b>State licensing requirements</b>	X				
<b>Other</b> <i>Early Childhood Family Education</i>	X	X	X	X	
<b>Early Childhood Screening</b>	X	X	X	X	
<b>WIC</b>			X	X	
<b>Family Home Visiting</b>			X	X	
<p><i>For Part C, It depends on child and family need as well as the least restrictive environment where services are occurring. For Part B it depends on child need as well as the least restrictive environment (ex. Child care vs. school readiness preschool)</i></p> <p><i>All programs with concerns about a children's development make a referral to the Help Me Grow program (Minnesota's early intervention/ECSE system).</i></p>					

<b>Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the state</b>					
<i>Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.</i>					
<b>Types of Programs or Systems</b>	<b>Elements of high-quality health promotion practices</b>				
	<b>Health and safety requirements</b>	<b>Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up</b>	<b>Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits</b>	<b>Health literacy</b>	<b>Other</b>
<i>Minnesota's QRIS addresses developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening and referral, but not follow up.</i>					

<b>Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the state</b>	
<i>Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the state. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.</i>	
<b>Types of Programs or Systems</b>	<b>Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today</b>
<b>State-funded preschool</b> <i>Specify:</i>	<p>In School Readiness programs, parents are considered full partners in their child's development and learning. Minnesota statutes require each school district to involve parents in program planning and decision-making. Parents have the opportunity to participate in volunteer opportunities with the program (e.g., classroom volunteer).</p> <p>School Readiness programs may add half-day, child-only time to Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) to foster substantial parenting education, provide parent and child kindergarten preparation/transition classes, and link with family literacy programs and family resource centers. Local School Readiness programs provide linkages and referrals to and collaborations with numerous community-based programs and services based on identified needs of children and families.</p>
<b>Early Head Start and Head Start</b>	All Head Start and Early Head Start programs provide comprehensive family services and parent engagement opportunity that include volunteer hours available in a variety of program activities, participation in parent committees in local programs, education and support groups for parents with common issues/interests, training on advocacy and active involvement in program

<b>Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the state</b>	
<i>Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the state. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.</i>	
<b>Types of Programs or Systems</b>	<b>Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today</b>
	<p>governance through the program's Policy Council.</p> <p>At the state level, parents are actively involved in the Minnesota Head Start Association, which offers a parent training conference each year that focuses on child development and parenting strategies, family management and advocacy. Parents have a parent affiliate group during Minnesota Head Start Association meetings and opportunities for parent input during decision-making are provided.</p>
<b>Programs funded under IDEA Part C</b>	<p>Evaluations to determine eligibility to programs under IDEA Part C are only conducted with parental consent. Parents are key members of the child's IFSP team in identifying strengths and needs, and the services and supports to address the child and family needs.</p> <p>Part C includes child and family outcomes which includes families reporting that the early intervention services have helped them to: know their rights; effectively communicate their child's needs; help their child develop and learn.</p> <p>Part C services are delivered in the natural environment of the child, which includes the child's home. Parents are directly involved in the home visits by the early intervention service providers. Services are provided to both the child and parents and are based on the needs of the child and the child's family. Links to other community supports and services are made based on the needs of the child and family.</p>
<b>Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619</b>	<p>Parents must give consent for their child to be evaluated to determine Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) services and sign off on their child's IEP. Parents are members of the IEP team and can identify other individuals they want to include as a member of the IEP team, beyond ECSE staff (e.g., advocate, other family members, and/or friends). IEP decisions are team decisions, which include parents as critical members. Parents receive procedural safeguard notices annually, which details dispute resolution procedures if a parent and the local school district do not agree on the services or setting proposed for their child.</p> <p>Assurances for family engagement include Part B Indicator 8, which reflects the percent of parents who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for their children with</p>

<b>Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the state</b>	
<i>Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the state. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.</i>	
<b>Types of Programs or Systems</b>	<b>Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today</b>
	disabilities.
<b>Programs funded under Title I of ESEA</b>	Preschool-age children participating in Title I programs are served in local School Readiness or Head Start programs. Please see these two types of programs above for a description of the family engagement strategies required.
<b>Programs receiving CCDF funds</b>	Free child care referrals are provided to all families with low-income families, including those eligible for Child Care Assistance, able to access more intensive consultation in locating high-quality early childhood options. Families who apply for Child Care Assistance are provided with a booklet that includes information about choosing quality child care, Child Care Resource and Referral services and other early childhood programs, such as Head Start, School Readiness, Special Education and Screening.
<b>Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements</b> <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>	
<b>Parent Aware—Level 1</b>	Programs or caregivers provide families with contact information for one or more local family education options (including but not limited to Minnesota Early Childhood Family Education Program), Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education Program is a program for all Minnesota families with children birth through kindergarten entrance. The program works to strengthen families with the goal of enhancing the ability of all parents to provide the best possible environment for their child's learning and growth.
<b>Parent Aware—Level 2</b>	Programs or caregivers provide information to families in accessing supports such as child care assistance, medical assistance, and public health services through one or more of the following: on-site staff, consultants, volunteers, a local collaboration or other cooperative agreement. Families are also engaged in their child's education and development when a program or caregiver scores at level 2 or higher.

<b>Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the state</b>	
<i>Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the state. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.</i>	
<b>Types of Programs or Systems</b>	<b>Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today</b>
<b>Parent Aware— Levels 3 and 4</b>	<p>Programs must actively assist families to meet the Physical Health and Well-being standard. Families are provided with observation summaries prepared using authentic observation practices. In addition, a program or caregiver provides families with child assessment results and if a child has an Individualized Education Plan or Interagency Family Service Plan, the assessment results are shared with the team with family's permission.</p> <p>Further, programs and caregivers at Levels 3 and 4 must demonstrate the ability to engage families across the range of cultures and languages represented within the early childhood program setting. Programs or caregivers score points for communicating program information in parent's primary language (e.g., through on-site staff, qualified volunteers, an interpreter service, or translated materials). Additional points are possible if the lead teacher or caregiver has completed training in working with families from different cultures and socio-economic levels.</p>
<b>State licensing requirements</b>	<p>Minnesota statute and rule require that licensed center-based programs and licensed family child care providers have training in working with families, provide parents with access to the program and communicate regularly with parents about their child's progress. (Minnesota Statutes sections 245A.40, subdivision 7(a)(7), 245A.50, subdivision 7(5))</p> <p>Both center-based staff and family child care providers must take training in working collaboratively with families, agencies, and organizations to meet children's needs and to encourage the community's involvement, including family studies and parent involvement (Minnesota Rule 9502.0395, subpart 1;9502.0405).</p> <p>Center-based programs are required to provide parents with written information about all policies and procedure, hold at least two conferences a year with parents about the child's growth and development and to provide daily written reports about the child's activities and needs (Minnesota Rule 9503.0090). Parents must be allowed to visit the program at any time during its hours of operation (Minnesota Rule 9503.0095).</p> <p>Licensed family child care homes must confer with parents when enrolling a child regarding child rearing, sleeping, feeding, and behavior guidance practices and maintain written instructions from parents on these preferences</p>

<b>Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the state</b>	
<i>Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the state. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.</i>	
<b>Types of Programs or Systems</b>	<b>Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today</b>
	on file (Minnesota Rule 9502.0405, subparts 1, 4 B). The provider must provide parents with a copy of the State Rule governing family child care homes and provide written information on a range of health, safety and business practices. For children with disabilities requiring special therapy, program, or behavior guidance, the parents, physician, or therapist must provide and the provider must follow written instructions for any special needs (Minnesota Rule 9502.0405, subparts 2, 3, 5).
<b>Other</b> <i>Describe:</i> Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)	<p>Administered by local school districts, Minnesota's ECFE program provides direct parenting education and support to families with children birth to kindergarten entry, and to expectant parents in a group setting or through home visits. The program is designed to meet the needs of parents in the community. The ECFE model requires parent/child interaction, child only time and parenting education during each class session taught by licensed early childhood teachers and parent educators. ECFE may also provide parent only classes.</p> <p>Many school districts provide population specific parenting programs, such as classes for fathers, grandparents, parents who have developmental disabilities, parents with children with developmental disabilities, parents whose children are in foster care due to neglect or abuse, parents who are English Language Learners or New Americans, parents who are in a homeless shelters or battered women's shelters, and collaborative programs with Adult Basic Education/family literacy, Head Start, School Readiness, birthing hospitals and WIC clinics. ECFE provides direct referrals to community programs and services based on family needs.</p> <p>Minnesota Statutes require each school district to have ECFE advisory councils whose members are primarily parent participants. Community professionals who provide services to families are also members of this council. Parents provide input to decisions made about the local ECFE program.</p>
<b>Other</b> <i>Describe:</i> Educate Parents Partnership (Minnesota Parents Know website)	As required in Minnesota statutes, Minnesota's parent website (MNPk; <a href="http://www.MNParentsKnow.info">http://www.MNParentsKnow.info</a> ) provides research-based, accessible child development, health and consumer safety information, and linkages to early childhood programs/services to parents of young children and those that work with families. The website is designed to be accessible by providing extensive

<b>Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the state</b>	
<i>Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the state. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.</i>	
<b>Types of Programs or Systems</b>	<b>Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today</b>
	<p>web content in Hmong, Somali and Spanish (audio, video and print), and weekly MomEnough™ parent podcasts in a print format.</p> <p>MNPK is a foundation for online parenting education by providing monthly parent webinars and weekly podcasts. Both strategies include specific programs to reach fathers, children with special needs, and assist with transition to kindergarten. Social media strategies are also included to reach families of young children including a parent forum on MNPK, YouTube videos and podcasts on iTunes (English, Hmong, Somali and Spanish).</p>
<p><b>Other</b>  <i>Describe:</i> Early Childhood Health and Development Screening (ECS)</p>	<p>All school district ECS programs enable parents to become more aware of the connections between physical health, development, learning and kindergarten readiness. Parents/family members are provided detailed information about their child’s health and development status collected at the time of an ECS, and a plan for referral and follow-up to the screening based on the child’s needs. This is provided during an in-person summary interview with the parent by a licensed health or education professional.</p> <p>ECS links and direct referrals parents/families to community services and programs to enhance their children’s development and readiness for formal education (e.g., Help me Grow (early intervention/Early Childhood Special Education), ABE, family literacy, WIC, Head Start, School Readiness, ECFE, preventive health services). Professional staff work with families in follow-up to the referral to help ensure that the child’s needs are addressed. Substantial outreach to all families, including families of Children with High Need, residing within the school district is required for this program.</p>

**Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials<sup>13</sup> currently available in the state**



List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the state	If state has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? (Yes/No/Not Available)	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
		#	%	
<b>Minnesota Career Lattice Steps 1-5</b>				
Minnesota Child Care Credential	Yes	-	-	103 child care providers started the Minnesota Child Care Credential in 2011, the first year the Credential was offered
<b>Minnesota Career Lattice Steps 6-7</b>				
MNAEYC Director's Credential	Yes	43	-	Data not available on the number of directors in the state in order to compute a percentage
National Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential	Yes**	4,429	-	Data not available on the total number of Early Child Educators in the state in order to compute a percentage
Certificate in Child Development or Early Childhood from a Minnesota Community or Technical College	Yes*	-	-	Data not available on number of educators who hold a Certificate in Child Development or Early Childhood
Diploma in Child Development or Early Childhood from a Minnesota Community or Technical College	Yes*	-	-	Data not available on number of educators who hold a Diploma in Child Development or Early Childhood
<b>Minnesota Career Lattice Steps 8-12</b>				
Associate degree in early childhood education or child development	Yes*	-	-	Data not available on number of educators who hold an associate degree in early childhood education or child development
Baccalaureate degree in early childhood education or child development	NA	-	-	Data not available on number of educators who hold a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education or child development
Post-baccalaureate (master's or doctoral) degree in early childhood education or child	NA	-	-	Data not available on number of educators who hold a post-baccalaureate degree in early

<b>Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials<sup>13</sup> currently available in the state</b>				
<b>List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the state</b>	<b>If state has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? (Yes/No/Not Available)</b>	<b>Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential</b>		<b>Notes (if needed)</b>
		<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	
development				childhood education or child development
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Certificate from Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota	No	45	-	Data not available on the total number of Early Child Educators in the state in order to compute a percentage
<p><i>The progression of credentials awarded in Minnesota is aligned with and reflected in the Minnesota Career Lattice indicated above by steps 1-12. The state workforce knowledge and competency framework is the Minnesota Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education and Care Practitioners.</i></p> <p><i>** Although the Council for Professional Recognition is not in MN, MN invests significant resources targeted to support and advise individuals serving children at high risk obtain a CDA. The CDA competencies described in the 13 functional areas align with Levels 1 and 2 across the eight content areas in the Minnesota Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education and Care Practitioners. MN has intentionally aligned the Core Competences and the National CDA goals in development of the MN Child Care Credential.</i></p> <p><i>*Half of the Community and Technical Colleges have aligned course content with the Minnesota Core Competencies.</i></p>				

<b>Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the state that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators</b>		
<b>List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the state that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators</b>	<b>Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year</b>	<b>Does the entity align its programs with the state's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? (Yes/No/Not Available)</b>
Minnesota Center for Professional Development (issue Minnesota Child Care Credential)	0	Yes
Minnesota Association for the Education	16	Yes

<b>Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the state that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators</b>		
<b>List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the state that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators</b>	<b>Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year</b>	<b>Does the entity align its programs with the state's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials?  (Yes/No/ Not Available)</b>
of Young Children (MNAEYC) issue MNAEYC Director Credential		
The National Council for Professional Recognition ***	334	Yes ***
<b>Technical/Community Colleges</b>		
Alexandria Technical College	21	Yes
Central Lakes College, Brainerd Campus	8	Yes
Century College, White Bear Lake Campus	0	NA
Dakota County Technical College	16	Yes
Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College	2	NA
Hennepin Technical College, Brooklyn Park (HTC Campus and Eden Prairie Campus)	20	Yes
Inver Hills Community College	7	NA
Itasca Community College, Grand Rapids Campus	3	NA
Lake Superior College Duluth Campus	0	NA
Leech Lake Tribal College	0	NA
Mesabi Range Community and Technical College	1	NA
Minneapolis Community and Technical College	53	Yes
Minnesota State College—Southeast Technical	4	Yes
Minnesota State Community and Technical College	3	NA
Minnesota West Community and College, Granite Falls Campus	5	NA
Minnesota West Community and	0	Yes

<b>Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the state that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators</b>		
<b>List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the state that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators</b>	<b>Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year</b>	<b>Does the entity align its programs with the state's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? <i>(Yes/No/Not Available)</i></b>
Technical College Virtual		
Northland Community and Technical College	0	NA
Northwest Technical College	6	Yes
Pine Technical College	6	Yes
Rasmussen College (Twin Cities, Mankato, St. Cloud, Moorhead)	91	NA
Ridgewater College, Hutchinson Campus	11	NA
Rochester Community and Technical College	24	Yes
Saint Paul College	53	Yes
South Central College	25	Yes
St. Cloud Technical College	4	Yes
White Earth Tribal and Community College	1	NA
<b>4-year Institutions</b>		
Augsburg College	0	NA
Bemidji State University	3	NA
Bethel University	0	NA
College of St. Catherine	53	NA
Concordia University, Saint Paul	91	NA
Crown College	4	NA
Gustavus Adolphus College	0	NA
Hamline University	0	NA
Martin Luther College	19	NA
Metropolitan State University, Metropolitan State University, Saint Paul Campus	13	NA
Minnesota State University, Mankato	26	NA

<b>Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the state that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators</b>		
<b>List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the state that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators</b>	<b>Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year</b>	<b>Does the entity align its programs with the state's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials?</b>  <i>(Yes/No/Not Available)</i>
Minnesota State University, Moorhead	18	NA
North Central University	0	NA
Northwestern College	8	NA
Saint Benedict/Saint Johns	0	NA
Saint Mary's University of Minnesota	0	NA
Southwest Minnesota State University	40	NA
St. Cloud State University	40	NA
St. Olaf College	0	NA
University of Minnesota—Crookston	8	NA
University of Minnesota—Duluth	19	NA
University of Minnesota—Twin Cities	33	NA
Winona State University	0	NA
<p>*** Although the Council for Professional Recognition is not in MN, MN invests significant resources targeted to support and advise individuals serving children at high risk obtain a CDA. The CDA competencies described in the 13 functional areas align with Levels 1 and 2 across the eight content areas in the Minnesota Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education and Care Practitioners. MN has intentionally aligned the Core Competences and the National CDA goals in development of the MN Child Care Credential.</p> <p>The progression of credentials awarded in Minnesota is aligned with the Minnesota Career Lattice. The state workforce knowledge and competency framework that the credentials are aligned with are the Minnesota Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education and Care Practitioners.</p>		

<b>Table (A)(1)-12: Current status of the state's Kindergarten Entry Assessment</b>					
<b>State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment</b>	<b>Essential Domains of School Readiness</b>				
	<b>Language and literacy</b>	<b>Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development)</b>	<b>Approaches toward learning</b>	<b>Physical well-being and motor development</b>	<b>Social and emotional development</b>
Domain covered? (Y/N)	Y	Includes early mathematics; early science planned	Y	Y	Y
Domain aligned to Early Learning and Development Standards? (Y/N)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Instrument(s) used? (Specify)	Work Sampling System P-4—MN	Work Sampling System P-4—Minnesota	Work Sampling System P-4—Minnesota	Work Sampling System P-4—Minnesota	Work Sampling System P-4—Minnesota
Evidence of validity and reliability? (Y/N)	Y	Y*	Y	Y	Y
Evidence of validity for English learners? (Y/N)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Evidence of validity for children with disabilities? (Y/N)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
How broadly administered? (If not administered statewide, include date for reaching statewide administration)	Annual 10% representative sample	Annual 10% representative sample	Annual 10% representative sample	Annual 10% representative sample	Annual 10% representative sample
Results included in Statewide Longitudinal Data System? (Y/N)	Planned	Planned	Planned	Planned	Planned
<p>* Cognition and general knowledge are represented in the assessment. See attached checklist. Scientific development is not currently in the checklist but Minnesota is planning on including it in 2012.</p> <p>In partnership with the Human Capitol Research Collaborative with the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota School Readiness Study completed a predictive validity report on the Minnesota version of the Work Sampling System © P-4 checklist which is described in E1.</p> <p>As part of MDE's second SLDS grant, the kindergarten entrance assessment results will be added to the longitudinal data system being developed for K-12, higher education and workforce data.</p>					

<b>Table (A)(1)-13: Profile of all early learning and development data systems currently used in the state</b>								
<b>Essential Data Elements</b>								
<i>(If program standards address the element, place an "X" in that box)</i>								
<b>List each data system currently in use in the state that includes early learning and development data</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Unique child identifier</b>	<b>Unique Early Childhood Educator identifier</b>	<b>Unique program site identifier</b>	<b>Child and family demographic information</b>	<b>Early Childhood Educator demographic information</b>	<b>Data on program structure and quality</b>	<b>Child-level program participation and attendance</b>
DHS Child Care Licensing database	DHS			X				
Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS)—student level data	MDE	X		X	X			X
Minnesota Electronic Child Care Information System (MEC2)	DHS	X		X	X	X	X	X
Minnesota Professional Development Registry	DHS		X	X		X	X	
The Minnesota Registration & Certification (MR&C) for Birth Data	MDH	X			X			
MNSTREAMS (Minnesota Streams to Quality) CCR&R training and grants supports	DHS		X	X		X		
NACCRRAware—Child care resource & referral system database	DHS	X		X	X	X	X	
Parent Aware TQRIS Database	DHS			X		X	X	
Staff Automated Reporting (STAR) teacher credentials,	MDE		X	X		X	X	

staffing assignments, turnover and wages.								
Women, Infants, and Children Program system—Health Benefits Real Time (HuBeRT).	MDH	X			X			



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

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

(a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;

(b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and

(c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

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

Evidence for (A)(2)

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

**(A)(2) Articulating the state's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda**

Minnesota has numerous strengths in how we support and educate young children, yet some children in our state blossom and thrive, while others do not. These gaps in opportunity and achievement are masked by our typically high national rankings on indicators related to the health, education, and well being of children (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011b). As is the case nationwide, our gaps in opportunity and achievement are based largely on the overlapping variables of race, income, and geography (Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota, 2011; Annie E. Casey, 2011b): where a child lives and how much a child's parents earn too often predict the child's eventual health and success.

We believe that this reality is unjust, and we are committed to closing these persistent gaps. In October 2010, our Early Learning Council set forth the following vision: "For the long term prosperity of Minnesota, it is imperative that young children are supported by their families and communities in achieving their maximum developmental potential. To accomplish this, we share responsibility to provide a continuum of comprehensive and effective programs, services, and partnerships. In our coordinated efforts we will reach across systems, cultures, and geography to provide equity of access for all children, especially for Minnesota's most vulnerable children."

Minnesota has a long history of working to improve children's outcomes. Our Early Childhood Family Education program pioneered universal parent education and engagement, and now makes licensed parent educators available in each of Minnesota's 339 school districts as well as in four of the state's tribal schools. We have evidence-based home visiting programs serving Children with High Needs starting at birth, including two Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting grants (one to Minnesota and one to the White Earth Band of Chippewa). The privately funded Minnesota Initiative Foundations provide leadership and funding in over 200 communities in rural Greater Minnesota, implementing evidence-based programs for children birth to five and their families. Most recently, the Initiative Foundations have won awards for their leadership in children's mental health by building community action teams that work to increase awareness, early intervention, and prevention efforts among families, child care providers, and healthcare professionals statewide.

In recent years, Minnesota's public and private sectors have come together with an unprecedented focus on closing the school readiness gap. A private, business-led nonprofit partnered with the state to implement Parent Aware, Minnesota's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. Private funding was invested in the research and public policy advocacy that resulted in the establishment of Minnesota's Office of Early Learning (OEL). The public and private sectors each invested in demonstration projects to explore the use of School Readiness Scholarships as a tool for increasing access to high-quality ELD programming for Children with High Needs. Minnesota's Early Learning Council developed a framework for an Early Childhood Comprehensive Plan (Appendix 3) that includes as its core areas of focus: educational preparation; healthy development; strengthened families; and governance, access, and finance.

These advances have set a course, but right now we are only walking forward when the numbers tell us we need to be running. The Early Learning Challenge presents us with the opportunity to crystallize our vision and dramatically accelerate our pace. Our State Plan will knit our existing strengths and investments together with grant resources to stretch in ambitious yet achievable steps toward our goal of closing the gap and preparing all of Minnesota's youngest children for success in school and life.

### **SETTING AMBITIOUS GOALS—A2a**

Our State Plan will change the inputs of our system (e.g., increase the number of quality programs), change alignment within our system (e.g., link data systems, improve the fidelity of screening procedures), and, most importantly, change the outputs of our system (e.g., children's outcomes). We present ambitious performance measures throughout this application that clearly describe what we can accomplish with the inputs to our system over the period of the grant (e.g., our State Plan will result in a nearly nine times as many rated programs in 2015, as compared to 2011). Based on the evidence and best practices that undergird our State Plan, we can project a clear trajectory for making significant, positive impacts on child outcomes that will ultimately reduce our achievement gap. For example, based on program evaluation findings, we fully expect that the children served by 3- and 4-star Parent Aware rated programs will make significant gains on important school readiness measures (Tout, et al., 2010b). Additionally, evidence suggests that the changes we are undertaking to improve the fidelity of our health and developmental screening will lead to more children with special needs being identified and referred earlier, resulting in better outcomes for them as well (Holm-Hanson, 2009). We will

ensure accountability for addressing and meeting the targets along our trajectory by making extensive investments in an assessment and data system. These tools will inform any needed course corrections along the way. By the end of 2015, we will be better able to answer research, policy, and program questions with accurate, timely information about children's progress toward school readiness. We will also be more able to describe contributing factors, such as information about Early Childhood Educators and the ELD Programs in which they work.

### **OVERALL SUMMARY OF THE STATE PLAN—A2b**

Our State Plan is a leap forward in the statewide improvement of quality, access to quality, and our ability to make evidence-based policy decisions. Our plan has a singular focus on Children with High Needs. We target grant activities on poverty, the broadest category of need, including children from birth to kindergarten entry who are from families living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Rate. We discerned this focus because our Kindergarten Entry Assessment, mirroring the results of a multitude of existing research, has repeatedly found that family household income, above all other variables, is a predictor of school readiness (Minnesota Department of Education, 2009). Furthermore, we know that when children who are otherwise in need of special assistance and support (e.g., children who have developmental delays, are dual language learners, etc.) are *also* living in poverty, experience multiple challenges and therefore warrant the greatest attention.

This Plan will immediately begin to work to improve the school readiness of Children with High Needs. Our strategies include investing in the communities in which they live, improving the quality of where they learn, empowering their families to make choices, focusing evidence-based professional development on the adults who care for them, and providing meaningful data to inform decision-making for the public and its policymakers. Our Plan's structure works like the cross continental railway by starting at two ends and building toward each other to create a singular, coherent system. On one end, closest to children's day-to-day lives, we make immediate, deep, and strategic investments in quality improvement and access to quality in four Early Learning Challenge Target Communities (Target Communities). On the other end, we strengthen our governance structure and carefully, efficiently, and innovatively expand our statewide infrastructure for learning from our system and for using evidence to make decisions at a variety of levels. We are committed to building a state system that is able to address the unique needs, cultures, and strengths of families and local communities while

relentlessly using evidence to support progress toward school readiness for Children with High Needs.

### **Early Learning Challenge Target Communities**

Throughout this State Plan, we highlight the Early Learning Challenge Target Communities (Target Communities): Minneapolis and St. Paul Promise Neighborhoods, the White Earth Reservation, and Itasca County (see Letters of Intent). In our Target Communities we will test the cumulative impact of grant activities. Full implementation of our State Plan in these areas will represent the most bold and comprehensive effort to improve school readiness in Minnesota's history. The communities we have chosen embody some of our toughest challenges: concentrated urban poverty (including new immigrant communities) and sparsely populated rural areas (including Indian Lands) with high poverty rates. They also embody some of our greatest strengths: each has leadership, resources, and community-based infrastructure in place to carry out the work of our State Plan in relevant and immediate ways. We will leverage the tremendous implementation and planning work that has been done to integrate programs and improve capacity through the Promise Neighborhoods in Minneapolis and St. Paul. We will enhance long-standing efforts in workforce development and parent engagement and empowerment on the White Earth Reservation. In rural Itasca County, we will increase capacity to serve Children with High Needs and examine the impact of these improvement efforts on children in a rural community with one of the state's most well-developed early childhood infrastructures for providing high-quality ELD services to children from birth to kindergarten entry. Our State Plan will layer deep investments in quality improvement and innovative access mechanisms on top of the existing infrastructures of each Target Community (Table A2-1 shows the elements of our State Plan and details which will be present in the Target Communities).

### **Building Quality and Ensuring Access to Quality**

The drive to quality that has been coalescing in Minnesota in recent years has been focused and rigorous. Catalyzed by local research (Grunewald & Rolnick, 2006), "high quality" has become a shared mantra for Minnesota's broad early childhood community and for unexpected partners, such as the business community (Appendix 4 and Letters of Support Appendix). Our State Plan relies on a multi-layered approach for improving program quality, but improving program quality is just a stop on the way. The focus of our quality improvement efforts is school readiness, plain and simple. To do this we rely on our Tiered Quality Rating and

Improvement System (B1, B2, B3, and B5), our Comprehensive Assessment System (C2), and our efforts to develop a Great Workforce (D1 and D2).

Parent Aware, Minnesota's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, is our premiere strategy for improving learning outcomes for children. Not only does Parent Aware systematically improve the quality of ELD experiences for children, but it also is distinguished among state TQRIS for its strengths in empowering parents with information on ELD Program quality. Our State Plan creates incentives and provides supports for ELD Programs of all types statewide to be rated through Parent Aware. In our Target Communities, we will deploy intensive quality supports as incentives to recruit programs into Parent Aware and to quickly improve quality in programs that serve large numbers of Children with High Needs. We expect these efforts to dramatically increase the number of ELD Programs participating in Parent Aware statewide; for example, the percentage of rated center-based and licensed family child care programs receiving Child Care Development Funds will increase from 7% to 35% by the end of 2015. In addition to direct-to-program quality supports, our Plan builds human capital by investing in Early Childhood Educators—those who make a tremendously important contribution to improving children's outcomes, other than parents. Over the period of the grant, workforce training incentives and supports will substantially increase the number of Early Childhood Educators who have attained credentials that are aligned with Minnesota's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, which has been developed to assure that Early Childhood Educators are equipped with the skills needed to support optimal learning for young children. By the end of 2015 there will be a 31% increase in the number of Early Childhood Educators holding the National Child Development Associate Credential. Program quality will also be buttressed by our High-Quality Plan to help ELD Programs and Early Childhood Educators choose, effectively use, and interpret child assessments and related results to ensure that we have the real time information needed to guide each child's steady growth and development.

Improving quality is critical, but to achieve our outcomes, families must be engaged and equipped with the knowledge of what their children need for strong, healthy development, and they must have access to quality services and programs. Our State Plan addresses these needs in a variety of ways. In our Target Communities, we will implement School Readiness Scholarships as a direct route for connecting Children with High Needs with the programs at the top tiers of

Parent Aware (B4). This locally-grown and -tested approach is a three-for-one strategy. It links access to quality by: creating incentives for providers to improve their quality, giving parents information to engage them in their child's school readiness, and providing adequate funding for Children with High Needs to access quality. This Plan also provides incentives for school districts to use their Title I funding for pre-kindergarten programs and bring those school-based programs into Parent Aware. Today, approximately 20% of the Minnesota children receiving Child Care Development Fund related subsidies attend programs in the top two tiers of Parent Aware. Coupling the increased capacity in Parent Aware rated programs with these access strategies will increase that percentage to 40% by the end of 2015.

These strategies to improve access are a critical first step, backed by evidence that they are effective in moving large numbers of Children with High Needs into quality programs and services to ensure their healthy development (Gaylor, Spiker, Williamson, & Ferguson, 2011; Gaylor, Spiker, Ferguson, Williamson, & Georges, 2009). More challenging is the ability to connect the hardest-to-reach Children with High Needs (e.g., those in rural areas with limited services, those facing language barriers, those with mental health needs) to high-quality ELD Programs and other supports critical to closing the achievement gap. To learn more about how best to promote development of all Children with High Needs, our Plan affords the opportunity to build on and enhance a number of innovative outreach and engagement strategies in our Target Communities, such as using the Early Childhood Family Education program to reach both parents and Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers who care primarily for infants and toddlers. Additionally, Minnesota and the White Earth Band of Chippewa each have Title V Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grants to provide evidence-based home visiting to the highest need families in three of our four Target Communities. Existing home visitors will connect families of Children with High Needs (birth to kindergarten entry) with high-quality ELD Programs, screening, and other critical services.

### **Establishing Governance and Accountability**

Leadership and vision drive systems. Our governance structure (A3) will clarify leadership, chart a course, and leverage joint-agency coordination to focus on shared goals. It will also provide the vehicle for focused and regular communication about the progress of our State Plan to create a feedback loop between state level leadership and local communities. Through leadership and governance, over time and beyond the four years of this grant, we aim to

make a real and ongoing impact on the state early childhood system. We are clear in our commitment to building and sustaining a standards-based system, a theme that runs through our State Plan. An important first step will be to bolster our existing Early Learning and Development Standards (C1). Our research-based ELD Standards for children birth to age five form the basis for ensuring that parents and ELD Programs are focused on a common set of developmentally appropriate expectations. We already gauge our overall progress toward our goal of improving outcomes for Children with High Needs with our Kindergarten Entry Assessment (E1), and our High-Quality Plan will improve its scope and accuracy. The dashboard information provided by the Kindergarten Entry Assessment will be complemented by our High-Quality Plan to establish extensive Data Linkages (E2) across state agencies. The linked data will provide actionable information that is specifically related to early learning and development services (inputs) and outcomes.

**Table A2-1. Implementation of State Plan Activities by Geographic Area**

<b>Early Learning Challenge Project</b>	<b>Statewide</b>	<b>ELC Target Communities</b>
<b>Parent Aware TQRIS</b>		
Pre-rating Support (B2)	X	X
Quality Improvement Coaching (B2)	X	X
Child Care Health Consultants (B2)		X
Quality Rating and Monitoring (B3)	X	X
Access: School Readiness Scholarships (B4)	Selected communities w/state support beginning in 2013	X
Title I Matching Grants (B4)		X
Comprehensive Assessment System (C2)	X	Plus: Personalized Learning Plans Pilot training modules
Education and training supports for Early Childhood Educators (D2)	X	X
Minnesota Reading Corps (D2)	Selected communities w/high poverty	X
Kindergarten Entry Assessment	X	Plus: Pilot MN KEA 2.0
Data System (E2)	X	Plus: Pilot Child/Case Mgmt System in ELD Programs



Early Learning Challenge Project	Statewide	ELC Target Communities
Family, Friend and Neighbor Supports	X New Immigrant Support— Selected Communities	Plus: ECFE Grants

### **FOCUSED INVESTMENT AREA SELECTION—A2c**

Our State Plan has two focal points: 1) build quality and increase access to quality and 2) establish governance and accountability. A large part of accomplishing the first point is included in Section B (High-Quality, Accountable Programs); these efforts will be complemented by focused investments in our Great Workforce (D1 and D2) and Comprehensive Assessment Systems (C2). Well-trained Early Childhood Educators play a critically important role in program quality. Minnesota is fortunate to have a running start in this area, with a professional development system that includes a Workforce Development and Competency Framework and an aligned progression of credentials and degrees. As a component of this Plan, we will focus investment on strengthening our existing professional development assets (D1) and using that strong professional development infrastructure as the basis for making significant investments in the human capital of Early Childhood Educators (D2). The final component in our approach to raising program quality comes from investment in a robust Comprehensive Assessment System (C2) that provides ELD Programs and Early Childhood Educators with the necessary tools for monitoring and supporting children’s development. These strategies will be supported by leadership from our strengthened governance structure (A3) and informed by an expanded statewide infrastructure for learning from our system and for using evidence to make decisions at a variety of levels (E1 and E2).

The framework for an Early Childhood Comprehensive Plan that was put forth by Minnesota’s Early Learning Council (Appendix 3) explicitly established four equal priorities—educational preparation; healthy development; strengthened families; and governance, access, and finance—that will lead to the goal of school readiness for all Minnesota children. It is undisputed that each of these priorities plays an equal role in improving school readiness outcomes for Children with High Needs, and each is important to a comprehensive system. The challenge and opportunity of this State Plan is to use the resources from the Early Learning

Challenge to make sustainable improvements to Minnesota's state system that coordinate with, support, and accelerate work on the existing framework. Because Minnesota has strong existing infrastructure and programs in the areas of C3 (Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs) or C4 (Engaging and supporting families), as described throughout the State Plan, we do not propose investment of Early Learning Challenge resources in these areas.

While we have chosen to focus investment in areas other than healthy development and family engagement, execution of our State Plan clearly benefits throughout from the incorporation of these areas: both are included in our Program Standards; physical health and well-being is one of the domains of our Early Learning and Development Standards; and parent engagement is one of the purposes of Parent Aware. In addition, our State Plan will not be implemented in isolation from the many ongoing, statewide efforts in family engagement (e.g., Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education program, a strong set of home visiting programs) and healthy development.

### **Why Minnesota?**

Minnesota is committed to this Plan. The Plan came together through intensive interagency planning; virtual and in-person public comment; Children's Cabinet conversations; meetings with provider, family, and advocacy groups; input from legislators of both parties; and the invaluable support of our private funding communities. The grant writing team was made up of state and county agency leaders and non-profit professionals who have deep and varied connections to Minnesota's early childhood past, present, and future. We have listened to the best ideas and focused our priorities, and we now present this Plan with all of our combined support behind it.

Minnesota's Plan builds on our strengths. It supports local control, providing both freedom and accountability. It provides the ability to test initiatives locally and learn from the evidence they produce. It puts into action our well-researched ELD Standards and weaves in our long-standing commitment to universal parent education. It uses our Kindergarten Entry Assessment to gauge our progress, based on its proven validity in predicting later school success. This Plan's implementation, like its creation, will be the result of public-private partnerships. For example, Parent Aware continues to be funded and evaluated in part by resources from the business and foundation communities.

Minnesota's Plan puts families first. Parent Aware is innovative in its focus on parents as customers and in its focus on parent engagement in the scoring system. Parent Aware also includes a full range of provider types (center and family-based child care, Head Start, school-based pre-kindergarten) in order to ensure we give families information about their full range of choices. Additionally, Parent Aware has a strong focus on supporting culturally specific providers in order to best meet the needs of diverse families.

Minnesota will be a strong example for the field and for other states. Minnesota's makeup reflects the diversity of culture, geography, language, and education that is found throughout the United States. Minnesota has large immigrant populations (Hispanic, Hmong, and Somali among the largest), a large number of "Indian Lands," and an urban core in addition to rural and isolated areas. Our State Plan to address these complex characteristics and dynamics will yield important insights for other states that face similar challenges. We are eager to share evaluation results, successes, and lessons learned through the Technical Assistance network being created for the Early Learning Challenge by the United States Departments of Education and Health & Human Services.

Minnesota's Plan uses head and heart. We focus on quickly impacting a broad group of Children with High Needs, while simultaneously building the statewide infrastructure that will broaden our impact for all Children with High Needs. The strategies we use for professional development, ongoing evaluation of Parent Aware, and improving our Kindergarten Entry Assessment system are all evidence-based. We recognize that the only truly sustainable solution for improving the school readiness of Children with High Needs is an ongoing or permanent commitment of resources to the early childhood system as a public good. By demonstrating impact, we can build public will to make early childhood a real priority. Our Plan is innovative, strategic, and compassionate; we believe that supporting Children with the Highest Needs is not only a moral imperative, but also an economic necessity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

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

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

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

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

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

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

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

- The completed table that includes a list of every Early Learning Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State and indicates which organizations and councils have submitted letters of intent or support (see Table (A)(3)-2).
- A copy of every letter of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils. (Letters should be referenced in the narrative but must be included in the Appendix with a table.)

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

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

**(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the state.**

As the governing body with primary responsibility for education, the state of Minnesota has, over time, taken a greater lead in developing and funding a coherent early childhood education system from the patchwork of programs and services that exist across the state. Historically, that patchwork has been defined by several unique features of geography and government. Early childhood programs under the jurisdiction of the Department of Human Services, including Child Care Assistance and licensing, are administered at the county level (87 counties), but supervised by the state. Minnesota has 339 independent school districts, 3 intermediate districts, 5 integration districts, 17 education districts, 4 tribal schools, 20 cooperative districts, 9 telecommunications districts, and 136 charter schools, each with the authority to make their own decisions about whether and how to provide a pre-kindergarten program. In Minnesota, there are also seven Anishinaabe reservations, established by treaty and considered separate and distinct nations by the United States government, as well as four Dakota communities, which also operate various departments and programs under the leadership of their independent Tribal Councils. These features of Minnesota's landscape mean that a great deal of coordination of services for children and their families happens at the local community level. Our creation of a governing structure for the State Plan will build on the lessons learned through those local collaborations while formalizing shared responsibility and common goals.

Minnesota has taken several important steps in the last year to go beyond coordination of programs to address authority and accountability in early learning. As a foundation for our progress in moving beyond the sometimes fragmented delivery of service across the state, Minnesota established key governance structures: the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (Early Learning Council), the Children's Cabinet, and the Office of Early Learning (OEL). Each of these structures includes an explicit focus on children from birth to grade three (Early Learning Council and Office of Early Learning) and beyond (Children's Cabinet focus includes birth to workforce entry). Each of these structures was implemented under the direction of Governor Mark Dayton, who has demonstrated a strong commitment to early learning and development since before he took office, and who has institutionalized that commitment since becoming Governor and issuing "Better Schools for a Better Minnesota: 7 Point Plan for Achieving Excellence" (Appendix 5).

### **State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care**

In response to the mandate of the Head Start Act of 2007, Minnesota established a State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care in 2009 and charged that group with making recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on how to create a high-quality early childhood system in Minnesota to ensure all children arrive at kindergarten school ready. When Governor Dayton took office in January 2011, he appointed new members to the Council and explicitly expanded the scope of the Council, based on his commitment to focus on early learning and school readiness. The Council's role includes all duties specified in federal law, as well as additional duties assigned by the Minnesota Legislature (Minnesota Statutes section 124D.141, subdivisions 1,2) and the Executive Order (Appendix 6). This Council is one of the primary mechanisms for gathering citizen input to shape and inform Minnesota's early learning system (for membership list, see Appendix 7).

### **Children's Cabinet**

In July 2011, the Minnesota Children's Cabinet was designated as the cross-agency leadership team for programs serving children and youth, and includes the Commissioners of Education, Health, and Human Services. This Cabinet, led by the Education Commissioner, meets regularly to coordinate goals, make strategic decisions, and direct state services, programs, and funds in an efficient manner for children of all ages, building strong connections between systems and programs that focus on children birth to five and the K-12 system.

### **Minnesota Office of Early Learning**

The Early Learning Council and the Children's Cabinet are important points of stakeholder and cabinet level decision making, but the day to day coordination and alignment of Minnesota's early childhood system will fall under the Minnesota Office of Early Learning (OEL).

The OEL, like so many of Minnesota's best ideas, was born of a public-private partnership and shaped by statewide public input. A bipartisan group of legislators passed a bill to create a task force to develop a plan for the Office of Early Learning, and their work was funded by our School Readiness Funders Coalition (now called Start Early: Funders Coalition for Children and Minnesota's Future). This task force, which was co-led by the National Conference of State Legislatures, consisted of one-third community leaders, one-third state legislators from both parties, and one-third state agency staff from the three state agencies



serving young children and their families. The task force was charged with studying governance issues, identifying priority functions for a Minnesota governance structure, and making a recommendation to the governor and legislature about what form of governance structure might best move Minnesota toward the goal preparing all children for school.

The functions identified as key priorities for the OEL align with the Early Learning Challenge priorities and focus areas. They will:

- Develop a seamless delivery system with local points of entry for early care and education programs, administered by local, state, and federal agencies. (High-Quality, Accountable Programs; Access)
- Coordinate relevant resources in public funding and ensure the accountability and coordinated development of all early care and education services from birth to kindergarten entrance. (Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children)
- Establish an administrative framework for and promote the development of early care and education services so that these services, staffed by well-qualified professionals, are available in every community for all families that express a need for them. (Access; Great Workforce)
- Explore creation of a data collection system to support the necessary functions of a coordinated early care and education system, allowing for accurate evaluation of impact. (Measuring Outcomes and Progress)

The OEL is a cost-effective hybrid that does not redirect resources into another silo; the OEL is not a place, but an innovative organizational and leadership structure that has real force because of the high-level role of its Director and the charge from the Governor for all three state agencies to participate and cooperate. The Office “opened” in late August 2011 with the hiring of OEL Director Dr. Karen Cadigan (see Appendix 8 for qualifications), who reports directly to the Commissioner of Education. The OEL maximizes Minnesota’s ability to manage and implement a State Plan focused on *system* building.

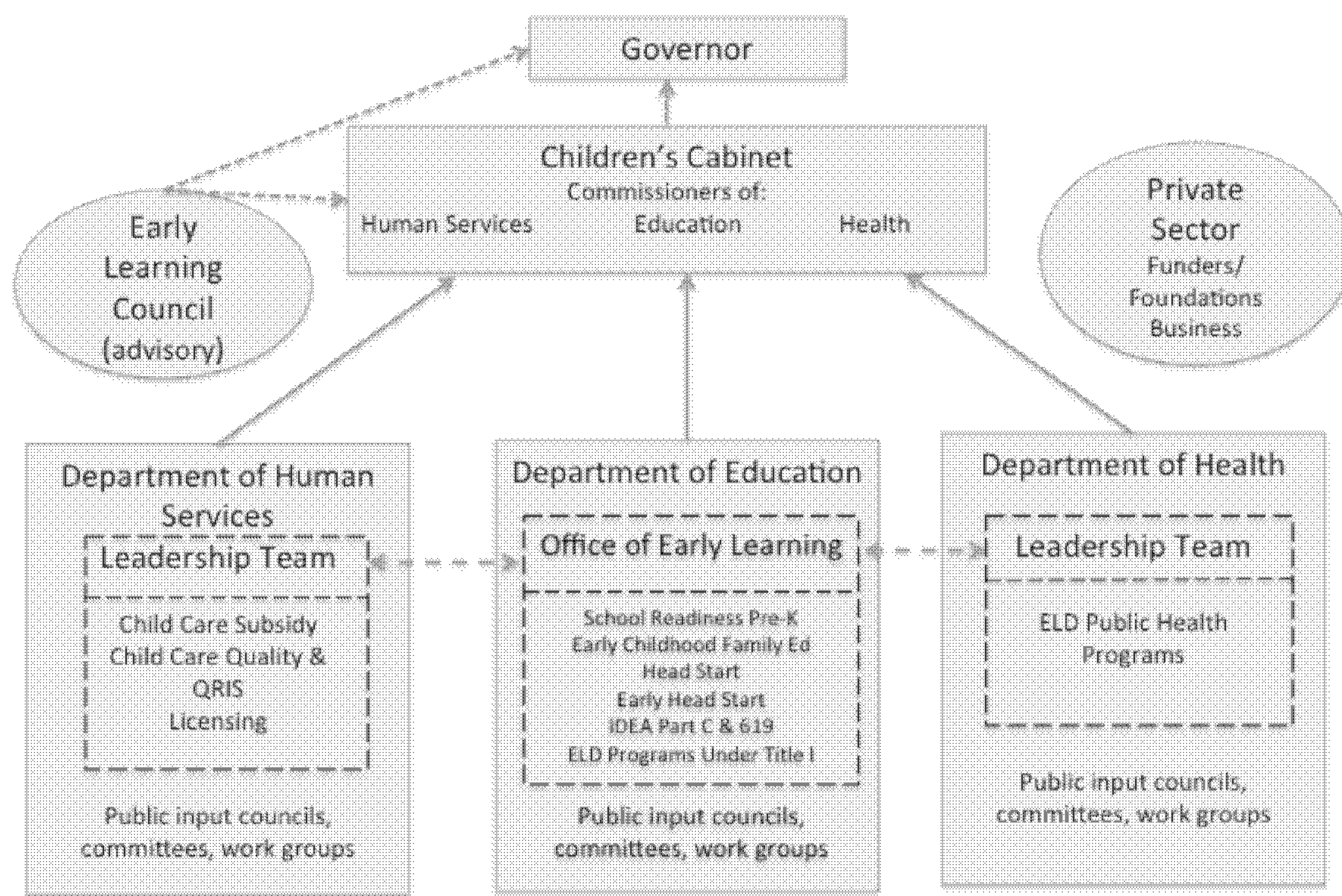
The OEL brings together staff from multiple agencies around common goals. The Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge goals and Minnesota’s resulting State Plan compliment and accelerate the OEL’s activities. Joining together early childhood and parent education with programs such as the Department of Health Early Childhood Systems grant, the Women Infants

and Children Program (WIC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Foster Care through the OEL allows for important connections to Children with High Needs that were missing before this level of governance. Minnesota is building on more than eight years of past work and planning from state agencies, advocates, legislators, and private funders, who worked to improve child outcomes in Minnesota before the current gubernatorial leadership that made governance, resources, and accountability a priority. Now, with improved governance and leadership, Minnesota has a strong foundation from which to focus on early childhood outcomes.

### **STATE PLAN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE—A3a1-3**

The Governor has designated the Department of Education as the lead agency for coordination of the State Plan, through the OEL. Commissioners from the three state agencies comprising the Children's Cabinet have each signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), delineating roles and responsibilities under the State Plan (see MOU Appendix). As described in those MOUs and throughout this Plan, the OEL is to serve as the primary point of contact for systems coordination for legislators, agency staff, and the public. The Office of Early Learning Leadership Team (Leadership Team) includes the Director of the OEL, who will oversee programs currently housed in the Department of Education; the Deputy Commissioner from the Department of Health; and the Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Children and Family Services from the Department of Human Services, each of whom bears responsibility for policy, budgeting, and rule making within their respective Departments. The Leadership Team collectively has responsibility for making recommendations to the Children's Cabinet regarding policy, budgeting, and rule making across the scope of programs currently housed in all three agencies to reduce fragmentation and improve services for young children and their families. The Leadership Team will make recommendations to the Children's Cabinet, which has authority to leverage and reallocate significant existing funding to sustain the State Plan and has authority to bring proposals to the Legislature as necessary. Based on the scope and responsibility outlined in state and federal statutes, the Early Learning Council will identify barriers and recommend solutions for providing effective services to young children. The OEL will work with the rest of the Leadership Team, the Children's Cabinet and the Early Learning Council to eliminate barriers to achieving the State Plan.

**Figure A-2. Minnesota Early Learning Challenge Organizational Structure**



**GOVERNANCE AND DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY—A3a2**

<b>(a) Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities</b>	
<b>Participating State Agency</b>	<b>Governance-related roles and responsibilities</b>
Minnesota Department of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiscal oversight of ELC grant</li> <li>• Preparation and submittal of required ELC fiscal and program reports</li> <li>• Oversight and management of activities listed in MOUs</li> <li>• Commissioner participation in Children’s Cabinet</li> <li>• Supervision of Office of Early Learning Director</li> <li>• Member on Early Learning Council</li> </ul>
Minnesota Department of Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversight and management of activities listed in MOU</li> <li>• Commissioner participation in Children’s Cabinet</li> <li>• Member on Early Learning Council</li> </ul>
Minnesota Department of Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversight and management of activities listed in MOU</li> <li>• Commissioner participation in Children’s Cabinet</li> <li>• Member on Early Learning Council</li> </ul>
Governor’s Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations to Minnesota Legislature on early learning policy and finance proposals</li> </ul>
<b>Other Entities</b>	

<b>(a) Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities</b>	
<b>Participating State Agency</b>	<b>Governance-related roles and responsibilities</b>
State advisory council on early childhood education and care – (Early Learning Council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advisory to Governor, Legislature and Children’s Cabinet</li> </ul>
All Public Input Councils and Committees, including State Interagency Coordinating Council for Part C of IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advisory to authorizing Department (Education, Human Services or Health)</li> </ul>
Other: Children’s Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decision-making authority (agency level)</li> <li>Dispute resolution authority and responsibility</li> </ul>
Other: Office of Early Learning, including Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Director for ELC State Plan</li> <li>Annual report on ELC grant progress to Children’s Cabinet and Early Learning Council</li> <li>Coordination with/liaison to relevant statewide task forces and councils (Minnesota’s Early Childhood Comprehensive System’s Grant, the Governor’s Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities, Maternal and Child Health Task Force, Head Start Collaboration Office, Statewide Longitudinal Data System governed by the P-20 Council)</li> </ul>
Other: Early Learning Leadership Team (Office of Early Learning Director and Assistant Commissioners from MDH and DHS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programmatic oversight of ELC grant</li> <li>Recommendations to Children’s Cabinet re: sustainability of grant activities</li> <li>Coordination with/liaison to the private sector including private funders and the business community</li> </ul>
Other: Private Sector (foundations and business)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decision-making authority over private funds</li> </ul>

### **PROGRAM, PARENT, AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT—A3a4**

Minnesota’s application and planning process included early and frequent involvement and feedback of Participating Programs; Early Childhood Educators; parents and families, including those of Children with High Needs; other key stakeholders; and the general public. Here again, public-private partnerships have made for a robust application process and set the stage for a broad-based buy-in to this State Plan. The planning process included sharing information on the State Plan with in-person and webcast audiences in seven sites around the

state, convened by the Department of Education and hosted by Early Learning Council members and local community funders. The Greater Twin Cities United Way (GTCUW) launched an interactive online template (modeled after the United States Department of Education’s Early Learning Challenge feedback site), where Minnesota’s early childhood community could document their bold ideas, provide feedback, and offer support for Minnesota’s Plan. A presentation to the Early Learning Council also provided its members with an opportunity to give feedback. For more on these activities, please see Priority 5.

In the implementation phase, this Plan includes several strategies for involving the vast array of stakeholders. A need identified in our fall 2010 Office of Early Learning survey is that providers and families are especially interested in more communication about what is happening at the state level with regard to early childhood programs, services, laws, and strategies. The current Commissioner of Education describes the OEL as “a one stop shop,” and the Office will coordinate two broad strategies to push information to interested stakeholders, with a focus on inclusion and transparency: a biannual statewide webcast to include stakeholders throughout the state, and use of the Office of Early Learning website as a one-stop resource for information, with links to other relevant resources.

**Table A3a4-1. Activities to Engage Early Childhood Stakeholders**

	<b>Biannual Statewide Webcast</b>	<b>OEL Website at MDE</b>	<b>OEL presence at professional conferences &amp; meetings</b>	<b>As needed, collaborative planning meetings</b>	<b>Parent update s and surveys</b>
<b>Participating Programs</b>	X	X	X	X	
<b>Early Childhood Professionals</b>	X	X	X	X	
<b>Parents and Families</b>	X	X			X
<b>Parents and Families of Children with High Needs</b>	X	X			X
<b>Private Funding Community</b>	X	X		X	
<b>Legislators</b>	X	X		X	
<b>Public</b>	X	X			X
<b>PreK-3 Leadership</b>	X	X	X	X	

<b>Group</b>					
<b>Other stakeholders: ICC, Libraries, Higher Education, counties, CCR&amp;R</b>	X	X	X		

### **DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT OF STATE AGENCIES—A3b**

To develop this State Plan, the Departments of Education (lead agency), Health, and Human Services worked in close coordination. Their respective commitments for fulfilling the ambitious yet achievable Plan presented throughout this application may be found in the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Education and the Department of Health and another between the Department of Education and the Department of Human Services (see MOU Appendix). Those MOUs clearly delineate each agency's role in implementing the Plan through detailed Scopes of Work. The budgets included with this application detail each agency's financial commitment and responsibility, including the Early Learning Challenge funds and how existing funding under the agency's jurisdiction will be leveraged. All activities described in the MOUs and all funding outlined in the budget are focused on maximizing the number of Minnesota ELD Programs that become Participating Programs throughout the grant period.

### **DEMONSTRATED SUPPORT FROM OTHER STAKEHOLDERS—A3c**

Minnesota's support for this Early Learning Challenge application has been extraordinary. Beginning even before Minnesota filed a letter of intent to apply, generous offers of support have come from all corners and constituencies in the state. In early September, over 300 Minnesotans in seven sites throughout the state attended an informational session, hosted by the Early Learning Council and many public and private partners. Participants from that session and others have demonstrated support through letters (Letters of Support Appendix), by offering contributions of ideas, evidence, and resources to support development of the Plan, and by sharing information on the Early Learning Challenge with their constituents. The website created to solicit public input for Minnesota's Early Learning Challenge Plan was had nearly 2,300 unique visitors who submitted ideas reflected throughout this Plan and voted on ideas submitted by others.

Table A3-2 outlines the support of Early Learning Intermediary Organizations in Minnesota. Many of them have been part of coalitions advocating for our new Office of Early Learning and for just the kind of State Plan that is presented in this application. Their letters indicate their eagerness to participate in the strategies outlined in Minnesota's Plan.

<b>Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)</b>	
<b>List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the state</b>	<b>Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support that is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?</b>
Child Care WORKS	Y
Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children and Minnesota School Age Care Alliance (MNAEYC-MNSACA)	Y
Minnesota Child Care Association	Y
Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network	Y
Minnesota Community Education Association (Represents Minnesota's ECFE and School Readiness programs in school districts)	Y
Minnesota Council for Exceptional Children: Division for Early Childhood (CEC:DEC)	Y
Minnesota Head Start Association (Represents Head Start Grantees)	Y
Minnesota Licensed Family Child Care Association	Y
Ready 4 K	Y
Tri-Valley Opportunity Council (Seasonal and Migrant Head Start)	Y
Tribal Early Childhood Network (Includes both Tribal Child Care Programs and Tribal Head Start)	Y
Unions	No unions represent MN providers.

In addition to the organizations noted in Table A3-2, the Letters of Support Appendix contains representative letters from the broad range of entities that have supported Minnesota's

move to high-quality early learning in recent years. They include both K-12 and higher education related institutions and organizations (the Minnesota School Boards Association and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities), organizations representing parents (Parents United for Public Schools and Parents as Teachers), leaders of business (the Minnesota Business Partnership and Minnesota Business for Early Learning), nationally known researchers in early learning (Dr. Art Rolnick and Dr. Arthur Reynolds), and our extraordinarily supportive philanthropic organizations, including Start Early: Funders for Children and Minnesota's Future. The opportunity presented by the Early Learning Challenge to accelerate and enhance the already extensive progress Minnesota has made toward improving the school readiness of Minnesota's Children with High Needs has generated tremendous public enthusiasm that will support these efforts during the grant period and far beyond.



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

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (*e.g.*, CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

(1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;

(2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and

(3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

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

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

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

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

- The State's budget (completed in section VIII).

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

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

Minnesota's Early Learning Challenge State Plan builds on our \$354 million annual state investment (SFY11; see Table A1-4) in Early Learning and Development (ELD) programs. The additional \$44.9 million requested in Early Learning Challenge funds over the four year grant period will accelerate the strong initiatives currently underway, as well as build long-term infrastructure. Our investments focus on accelerating statewide improvements to quality and access to that quality for Children with High Needs, we also enable parents, Early Childhood Educators, program administrators, and policymakers to access information at multiple levels (child, Early Childhood Educator, ELD Program, and system) and to use that information to make decisions, from day-to-day instruction of children to targeting future investments in early learning, both during and long beyond the grant period. The Early Learning Challenge grant provides less than half of the total \$105 million budget for this four-year Plan.

To accomplish our State Plan we will leverage existing public and private investments, most of which are documented in the budget materials included with this application (VIII). There are also, there are substantial public and private investments in our Target Communities for which it is difficult to provide a full, detailed accounting at the appropriate geographic level (e.g. the Promise Neighborhoods operate on the scale of city blocks) and to avoid "double counting" of resources that are part of statewide figures. The following budget information related to those efforts can help to provide context for the investments that will help us accomplish our State Plan in our Target Communities. The Itasca County Invest Early project's annual budget is \$3.2 million (public and private sources). The Northside Achievement Zone, Minneapolis' Promise Neighborhood applicant, included more than \$700,000 in annual investment for early childhood related initiatives in its recent application for funding. They also documented nearly \$1.7 million in ongoing, existing early childhood investments in the area. The St. Paul Promise Neighborhood requested just over \$1.8 million for early childhood initiatives over the five years of the Promise Neighborhood grant. The White Earth Band of Chippewa invests federal and tribal resources in early childhood education and development services, including recent funding in the amount of \$526,000 from the federal Tribal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program.

By the end of 2015, statewide participation in Parent Aware Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) will increase dramatically (B1, B2, B3, B5, and for performance targets see Table B4c1), with participating ELD Programs of all types receiving quality improvement support (B2) aligned with Parent Aware and the Early Learning and Development Standards (C1) that form its foundation. Those quality improvements have real, immediate benefits for Children with High Needs and other children served by each participating program. We make significant investments in improving human capital through our Early Childhood workforce (D1 and D2), with training and scholarships to help Early Childhood Educators move up a ladder of competence and credentials. We make significant, up-front investments in four Early Learning Challenge Target Communities (Target Communities)—investments with direct and enduring benefits: Children with High Needs get access to the highest-quality ELD Programs (B4); ELD Programs receive intensive assistance improving their quality; and school districts have unprecedented incentive to invest Title I dollars in high-quality ELD Programs. Beyond that, investments in the Target Communities provide Minnesota with lessons about how to replicate intensive, community-based efforts throughout the state, in rural areas and urban areas, and communities with deep concentrations of Children with High Needs, during the grant period and beyond.

### **Early Learning Challenge Project Budgets**

This Section presents budget information on each of the projects in Minnesota's State Plan, including information about the total cost during the grant period. It also presents information on the sources of funding dedicated to the project, including existing public funds, private funds, and Early Learning Challenge grant funds (A4a and Table A4-1). For each project, we present information on how the investments will be sustained after 2015 (A4c). All of this information is presented sequentially for each project. More detailed information on the adequacy, necessity, and reasonability of each project's budget, as well as how the funds are allocated by line item (A4b), is available in the Budget Section tables and narratives later in this application. Each participating state agency will manage the ELC grant funds according to state financial requirements and procedures as well as any applicable federal requirements. The three state agencies currently have existing requirements for inter-agency agreements and will also operate under the requirements of the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU Appendix) to carry

out and accomplish the work required under the Plan and workscope. Under Budget Part II—Narrative, each of the participating state agency narratives describes budget details by budget category for each of the projects described in the Plan. The Office of Early Learning Leadership Team will coordinate all budgets.

To be clear: grant funds are used to supplement, accelerate, and enhance efforts already underway in each of the projects presented here. Not one dollar of Early Learning Challenge grant funding is used to supplant existing public or private funding. To the contrary, even the work done in planning for the Early Learning Challenge grant has leveraged additional private resources to support the projects presented in this Plan.

### **GOVERNANCE—A3**

All the activities presented in Section A3 that are designed to support and govern the projects outlined in this Plan have existing support. All leadership, including the Governor, the Children’s Cabinet, and the Office of Early Learning are supported throughout the grant period and beyond through state General Fund dollars. The public outreach and engagement strategies described in A3 are also carried out using existing state funding, and all will continue with state dollars after 2015. The Office of Early Learning was created based on planning work supported by Start Early: Funders for Children and Minnesota’s Future, which includes a statewide group of philanthropic organizations (see Priority 5 and Letters of Support Appendix).

### **Parent Aware Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (B1-B3, B5)**

**\$9,760,457 Public Funds (CCDF)**

**\$7,600,000 Private Funds**

**\$7,978,232 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$25,338,689 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

The Parent Aware TQRIS is already implemented in Minnesota. Launched with private funding from the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation (see Letters of Support Appendix), Parent Aware is now supported by a combination of public and private funding. In this Plan, the Department of Human Services devotes \$9,760,457 in Child Care Development Fund quality dollars to support the quality assurance functions (B3) in Parent Aware, in addition to sustaining the statewide professional development and Child Care Resource and Referral system that provides support to ELD Programs in improving their quality through strategies increasingly aligned with Parent Aware. Since its inception, Parent Aware has focused on marketing ratings

to parents and providing evaluation focused on ongoing validation and improvement of the rating system. Those functions have always been supported through private investments, and those investments will continue through the grant period, using \$3 million from the private Parent Aware for School Readiness business-supported nonprofit (see Letters of Support Appendix). Private investment is also committed by Greater Twin Cities United Way to support quality improvement activities aligned with Parent Aware in the nine county Metro Area (see Priority 5 and B2) and evaluation of the impact of quality improvement efforts statewide (B5). This investment in quality improvement and related evaluation totals \$4.6 million from Greater Twin Cities United Way over the grant period.

Early Learning Challenge dollars supplement this work by focusing on quality improvement for participating ELD Programs. That focus accomplishes two goals. First, statewide penetration of Parent Aware dramatically increases (see performance targets in Table B4c1) in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs over the next four years. ELD Programs are incented to enter the rating system because doing so allows them to learn how their program's quality could be improved and provides support to make those improvements. That support includes quality coaches; quality improvement grants to allow them to address gaps in order to increase their rating; and, in the Target Communities, Child Care Health Consultants. Second, those quality improvements have immediate and lasting benefits for every child served by that program, long beyond the grant period.

Early Learning Challenge dollars accelerate the most expensive component of Parent Aware—real improvement of ELD Program quality—at a rate not otherwise possible, leaving Minnesota well positioned to continue using Child Care Development Fund quality set-aside and private dollars to sustain and enhance Parent Aware after the grant period. Privately supported statewide marketing of Parent Aware ratings will generate increased parent/caregiver demand for quality rating information, generating public will for continued investments, both public and private, in Parent Aware.

**Access to Quality ELD Programs for Children with High Needs (B4)**

**\$10,160,000 Public Funds (Title I and MIECHV)**

**\$20,312,961 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$30,472,961 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

The strategies for increasing access for Children with High Needs to high-quality ELD Programs presented in B4 use Early Learning Challenge grant dollars for two projects: School Readiness Scholarships (\$12,867,836 total); and Title I Match Grants (\$17,605,125 total). These projects are each only available in the Target Communities. There are two primary purposes for launching and evaluating these projects. First and foremost, they create powerful incentives for ELD Programs to enter Parent Aware and serve Children with High Needs—they must do so in order to participate in either project. This requirement will increase market penetration of Parent Aware dramatically during the four-year period, again resulting in quality improvement and related benefits to children from all participating programs. A sizable group of Children with High Needs will also benefit directly from these access projects: 1,282 children will receive two years of School Readiness Scholarships during the grant period, and 2,500 children will attend one year of high-quality ELD programming operated by school districts (supported half with grant funds and half with the districts' own Title I funds). The school readiness benefits that accrue to participating children are foundational investments in human capital that will continue as those children enter kindergarten and beyond.

In addition to the participating districts' Title I funds (\$8,750,000), Minnesota and the White Earth Band Tribal Council dedicate federal home visiting resources (MIECHV totaling \$1,410,000 and Tribal Material, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program funding) to support the home visiting activities to link Children with High Needs to high-quality ELD Programs.

Both of these access projects will provide funding that may be combined with existing state and federal funding available to provide eligible Children with High Needs with access to various types of ELD Programs (see Table A1-4), including supplemental state spending on Head Start, state funded pre-kindergarten (School Readiness), state contributions to IDEA Part C and Early Childhood Special Education, state match to the Child Care Development Fund, and state contributions to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. In cases where the children have not yet entered kindergarten, all of those funding sources will remain available to eligible families to support their ongoing participation in ELD Programs after the grant ends. Those funding sources do not provide the same level of incentive to ELD Programs to serve Children with High Needs. However, during the 2011 Minnesota Legislative Session, the Legislature created a state General Fund-supported Scholarship program. The Legislature directed the

Department of Education to develop a plan for implementing the Scholarships by January 15, 2012, with a \$4 million appropriation beginning on July 1, 2012. The Department of Education intends to develop a Scholarship plan that complements the grant-funded School Readiness Scholarships, to assure streamlined, efficient, coherent implementation of the two efforts. The Legislative commitment to the Scholarship funding (\$4 million in 2013 and \$2 million per year going forward after SFY2013) will be another way to sustain access to high-quality ELD Programs for Children with High Needs after the grant period. By the end of the grant period, school districts that opted to take advantage of the Title I match offered with RTT grant funds will have built high-quality, school-based pre-kindergarten programs and will be well positioned to realize the sustained benefit of school ready children (e.g., reduced need for special education and other supplementary services). For this reason, districts will have an incentive to continue making investments in early learning and development using existing, ongoing sources of funding (e.g., state School Readiness, Title I, etc.).

Finally, the evaluation of the impact of various approaches to Scholarships developed by each Target Community will provide evidence to guide future state and private investments in School Readiness Scholarships throughout Minnesota.

#### **EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS—C1**

**\$279,530 Public Funds (ARRA)**

**\$220,800 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$500,330 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

Our High-Quality Plan uses grant dollars for two activities related to our ELD Standards. The first will formalize a process for continuous improvement of the Standards, and the second will establish a new strategy to improve usage of the Standards by Early Childhood Educators serving Children with High Needs. Early Learning Challenge dollars will supplement existing American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to accomplish these activities.

At the end of the ELC grant period we will have more Early Childhood Educators trained on effectively incorporating the Standards in children's daily activities. In addition, we will have completed training materials and related resources that will be available on an ongoing basis. The Department of Education is committed to partnering with providers of professional development to ensure that training based on the developed materials continues beyond the period of the grant. These investments will also result in a set of Early Learning and

Development Standards that reflect updated research and best practices and are better aligned with our K-12 Academic Standards, along with the establishment of an ongoing process for continuous improvement of our Early Learning and Development Standards.

### **COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT—C2**

**\$ 18,912,824 Public Funds (Part C and EC Screening)**

**\$2,225,166 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$21,137,990 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

Implementation of our High-Quality Plan to create a Comprehensive Assessment System will result in the following outcomes: establishing an Assessment and Data System Task Force; improving the delivery of developmental screening; improving the ability of Early Childhood Educators to choose, use, and interpret assessment data; expanding use of electronic Cooperative Personalized Learning Plans; and implementing a statewide School Readiness Report Card. Existing state spending of federal Part C Child Find, Minnesota's Help Me Grow program (\$4,512,824), early childhood screening funding (\$14,400,000) and ELC grant funds will be aligned to accomplish these outcomes.

The Assessment and Data Task Force will complete its work during the period of the grant, presenting its final report no later than July 1, 2013. The Task Force will propose a top-level design for a Comprehensive Assessment System, as well as recommendations for implementation and ongoing evaluation—work that will form the lasting basis of our Comprehensive Assessment System. Over the course of the grant period we will invest grant funds to pilot and evaluate online health and development screening tools and related training. In year four of the grant period, online screening will be implemented statewide. This will be maintained into the future. Activities to improve the ability of Early Childhood Educators to choose, use, and interpret assessment data will result in completed online training resources and protocols for advancing the capacity of early childhood professionals to use environmental rating data to improve program services; these online resources will be made available on an ongoing basis. Grant funds will be invested in improving and piloting Cooperative Personalized Learning Plans, which will result in a plan for statewide use and a business plan for long-term sustainability that will inform future statewide implementation. Grant investments will result in the implementation of a public system-wide School Readiness Report Card. Minnesota is committed to data collection and reporting through 2021.



**WORKFORCE FRAMEWORK—D1****\$ 200,000 Public Funds (CCDF)****\$ 105,200 ELC Grant Funds****\$ 305,200 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

Our High-Quality Plan for developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials will result in a process for continuous improvement of our existing Core Competencies and an increase in the number of postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers who align training, course offerings, and program content with the Competencies. We will also invest in producing two companion guides that will make our Workforce Knowledge and Development Competencies for Early Childhood Educators serving Children with High Needs. To accomplish these outcomes, we will couple ELC grant investments with \$200,000 in existing Child Care Development Fund dollars.

This strategy will result in enduring partnerships with postsecondary institutions and other providers of professional development services, and ongoing commitments to use the improved Core Competencies as the basis for the training they provide. The process for continuous improvement of the Core Competencies that is put in place will be continued on regular schedule using existing resources.

**WORKFORCE SUPPORT—D2****\$ 10,620,000 Public Funds (CCDF and Part C/Centers of Excellence)****\$1,080,000 Minnesota Reading Corps****\$ 5,415,200 ELC Grant Funds****\$17,115,200 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

Our High-Quality Plan for improving the knowledge, skills, and retention of Early Childhood Educators working with Children with High Needs will result in substantial increases in the numbers of Early Childhood Educators who have completed credentials that are aligned with our Core Competencies. We accomplish this by increasing the capacity for coaching, consultation, and mentoring on child and program assessment; increasing access to training on Parent Aware Program Standards, including through regional Centers of Excellence; increasing subsidized access to the Minnesota Child Care Credential; and increasing the availability of scholarships available for the completion of degrees and certificates at postsecondary institutions. To achieve these outcomes, we will invest ELC grant funds and public funds from

the Child Care Development Fund (\$6,620,000) and our State General Fund (\$4,000,000 for the Centers of Excellence), combined with \$1,080,000 offered through our partnership with the Minnesota Reading Corps.

The efforts outlined to support the development of our Great Workforce are investments in human capital development and are by their nature sustained over time. The improved skills of Early Childhood Educators will continue to contribute to program quality beyond the period of the grant. After the end of the grant period, we will continue to work to make the opportunities developed as part of this State Plan available to future Early Childhood Educators, with the continued investment of Child Care Development Fund resources and our ongoing investment in the Centers of Excellence.

#### **KINDERGARTEN ENTRY ASSESSMENT—E1**

**\$1,124,000 Public Funds (State General Fund)**

**\$305,200 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$1,429,200 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

The ongoing activities related to Minnesota's Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) are supported using state general fund dollars, as they have been since the KEA was launched in 2002. The state appropriation for the KEA is \$281,000 annually, which is the cost to conduct the current version of the assessment (MN KEA 1.0) with a sample of children statewide. State general funds will later provide the support for conducting the new MN KEA 2.0, as it replaces MN KEA 1.0. The one-time cost for selecting or developing and piloting MN KEA 2.0 is supported using ELC grant funds.

#### **DATA SYSTEM—E2**

**\$300,000 Public Funds (SLDS grant funding)**

**\$7,720,642 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$8,020,642 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

Minnesota's contribution of existing public funds to support our early learning data system involves \$300,000 in funding from Minnesota's current State Longitudinal Data System grant, already underway building a P-20 system that provides a foundation for the Early Learning Challenge data systems work. The remainder of the funding is requested from the ELC grant, in order to develop the data systems described in E2 to create actionable data specifically related to ELD outcomes, using data elements from the Departments of Education, Health, and

Human Services. Existing staff will provide the ongoing data governance structure for ELD data initiatives across the three Departments. Ongoing operation of the systems developed using ELC grant funds will also be provided through existing resources across the three agencies.

### **FAMILY FRIEND & NEIGHBOR SUPPORT—Priority 2**

**\$196,000 Public Funds (State General Fund)**

**\$158,112 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$354,112 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

The activities described in Priority 2 are designed to create pathways for legally unlicensed Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) providers to improve their quality through culturally appropriate outreach and training activities, and, if interested, enter the Parent Aware TQRIS by first becoming licensed family child care programs. Most of the activities are supported through existing funding sources, including the annual state general fund appropriation of \$49,000 for the Minnesota Parents Know website, which is a key education resource. Another support tapped for activities in this Priority is the grant awarded to Resources for Child Caring for two years to help Iraqi and Bhutanese women refugees develop home based child care programs. Existing state general funds also support the Early Childhood Family Education program in every school district in Minnesota, as well as in four Tribal schools. If the approach outlined in Priority 2 is successful, ECFE programs in districts statewide could be leveraged to support quality improvement and promote Parent Aware participation among FFN providers. In addition, the sustainability strategies described for Parent Aware (above), including the Child Care Development Fund quality set-aside dollars, would support participation of FFN providers who enter the licensing system and then volunteer for Parent Aware rating.

<b>Table (A)(4)-1 Existing other Federal, state, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.</b>					
<b>Source of Funds</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2012</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2013</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2014</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2015</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>MDE</i>					
<i>ARRA Funding to Early Learning Council</i>	\$279,530	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$279,530
<i>Part C Child Find: Help Me Grow</i>	\$1,128,206	\$1,128,206	\$1,128,206	\$1,128,206	\$4,512,824

<b>Table (A)(4)-1 Existing other Federal, state, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.</b>					
<b>Source of Funds</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2012</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2013</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2014</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2015</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Early Childhood Screening</i>	\$3,600,000	\$3,600,000	\$3,600,000	\$3,600,000	\$14,400,000
<i>Part C: Centers of Excellence</i>	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$4,000,000
<i>State General Fund: Kindergarten Entry Assessment</i>	\$281,000	\$281,000	\$281,000	\$281,000	\$1,124,000
<i>State General Fund: Minnesota Parents Know</i>	\$49,000	\$49,000	\$49,000	\$49,000	\$196,000
<i>Federal SLDS Funding</i>	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$-	\$300,000
<b>DHS</b>					
<i>CCDF Quality Set Aside and Targeted Funds</i>	\$3,965,457	\$4,205,000	\$4,205,000	\$4,205,000	\$16,580,457
<b>MDH</b>					
<i>MIECHV Home Visiting</i>	\$470,000	\$470,000	\$470,000	\$0	\$1,410,000
<b>Private</b>					
<i>Private Funding: Marketing of Parent Aware (PASR)</i>	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$2,000,000
<i>Private Funding: Evaluation of PA (PASR &amp; GTCUW)</i>	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$1,600,000
<i>Private Funding: Quality</i>	\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000	\$750,000	\$750,000	\$4,000,000

<b>Table (A)(4)-1 Existing other Federal, state, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.</b>					
<b>Source of Funds</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2012</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2013</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2014</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 2015</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Improvement (GTCUW)</i>					
<b>Other</b>					
<i>Minnesota Reading Corps</i>	\$540,000	\$540,000	\$-	\$-	\$1,080,000
<i>Title I from Participating Districts</i>	0	\$1,750,000	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000	\$8,750,000

## B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

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

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--

- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
- (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
- (4) Family engagement strategies;
- (5) Health promotion practices; and
- (6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards<sup>14</sup> that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

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

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

Evidence for (B)(1):

- The completed table that lists each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the State and the elements that are included in those Program Standards (Early Learning

and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, Qualified Workforce, Family Engagement, Health Promotion, Effective Data Practices, and Other), (see Table (B)(1)-1).

- To the extent the State has developed and adopted a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System based on a common set of tiered Program Standards that meet the elements in criterion (B)(1)(a), submit--
  - A copy of the tiered Program Standards;
  - Documentation that the Program Standards address all areas outlined in the definition of Program Standards, demonstrate high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards, and are linked to the States licensing system;
  - Documentation of how the tiers meaningfully differentiate levels of quality.

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

The operative word in our State Plan is quality. We rely on connecting Children with High Needs to high-quality ELD Programs as our main strategy for achieving better school readiness outcomes for Children with High Needs, something we know is a critical component of closing the achievement gap. Parent Aware Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) is our quality nexus. We use it to distinguish program quality and to improve it. It provides us with the opportunity to make the imperative link between programs of known quality and Children with High Needs. It also gives us a way to coordinate our investments, for example by investing in training for Early Childhood Educators working in Parent Aware rated programs.

Parent Aware stands out among TQRIS nationwide because of its focus, first and foremost, on providing parents with meaningful, accessible information about the quality of ELD Programs. Parent Aware differentiates quality levels in meaningful ways using a 4-star scale that parents can immediately understand or quickly learn. Its Program Standards are rooted in research that defines which program features most impact children's school readiness. Parent Aware is a voluntary system that offers rewards (e.g., quality improvement supports and marketing supports) to incent program participation. The ratings are marketed aggressively to parents using a parent-friendly website, banners, the Child Care Resource & Referral system (CCR&R), and radio and internet ads.

Parent Aware is the result of a public private partnership between the Departments of Human Services and Education and the business-led nonprofit Minnesota Early Learning Foundation (see Priority 5), which invested \$5 million in the four-year pilot of Parent Aware that began in 2007. At the conclusion of the pilot, Parent Aware was available in two rural counties and to varying degrees in the seven-county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. The pilot included 388 ELD Programs of all types serving nearly 24,000 children. The density of participation among eligible programs at the conclusion of the Parent Aware pilot was 28% (Tout, Starr, Isner & Cleveland, in process). A full 20% of children using the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), Minnesota's CCDF funded child care subsidy program, currently participate in ELD Programs in the top two tiers (3- and 4-star) of Parent Aware. Evaluation results demonstrate that children in highly rated programs are scoring at or above national averages on standardized measures of language, literacy, and early numeracy (Tout, et al., 2010b).



Parent Aware is implemented and fully evaluated. As part of the pilot, Program Standards were tested and validated. The conclusion of the pilot marked the start of a seamless transition to the scale up of a statewide system. Parent Aware will be available to Head Start, school-based pre-kindergarten, and accredited programs in every corner of the state by the end of 2011. Minnesota is using Child Care Development Fund quality dollars to support Parent Aware and is increasingly aligning existing state early childhood resources with Parent Aware Program Standards. Significant private funding commitments will support our efforts and are in place for evaluation, marketing, and quality building to support.

Our State Plan uses Early Learning Challenge grant resources to make strategic, one-time investments in quality improvement that also serve as incentives for ELD Programs to enter Parent Aware (B2). Additional supports will come to programs in the form of access investments that will contribute to lasting program quality as well as to outcomes for individual Children with High Needs (B4). We will focus on continuous improvement by regularly reviewing our Program Standards (B1), the rating process (B3), and quality improvement strategies in light of evaluation findings (B5). We will also continue our strong tradition of focus on involving culturally and linguistically diverse licensed family child care programs and provide pathways to quality improvement, licensure, and rating for interested Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers (Priority 2).

#### **STATEWIDE TIERED PROGRAM STANDARDS—B1a**

Parent Aware uses a combination of a block approach and a point-based system involving four rating categories: Physical Health and Well-Being, Teaching and Relationships, Assessment of Child Progress, and Teacher Training and Education. Parent Aware Program Standards (see Appendices 9-12 for Standards, Indicators, and Scoring Summaries) encompass the following six rating categories to promote and measure program quality in the many types of classrooms and care situations found in Minnesota.

##### ***1) Early Learning and Development Standards***

Minnesota's Early Learning and Development Standards (called the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress, or ECIPs—see C1) for children birth to five are at the foundation of Aware. Parent Aware Program Standards require that instruction and assessment be aligned with the ECIPs and the ratings are built on the ECIPs, which function like a scaffold. For example, ELD Programs must ensure that their staff members are familiar with the ECIPs before earning 1

star, and to reach 3 or 4 stars requires both familiarity with the ECIPs and also alignment of curriculum and assessment with them.

### ***2) A Comprehensive Assessment System***

Parent Aware measures program quality, in part, by evaluating the extent to which programs have implemented a comprehensive assessment system, defined as one that uses valid assessments to gather information on both the process and the context of children's learning and development. This includes routine and appropriate use of early childhood screening using an approved tool to administer formative assessment. To attain 3 or 4 stars, programs must share assessment results with families and use them to inform instruction. Programs wishing to achieve 2 stars or higher must engage in an approved self-assessment process that is informed by Environment Rating Scales (FCCRs, ECCRs and ITERs; Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 2007; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2005; Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 2006). Parent Aware also uses the CLASS™ (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008) tool to measure child-adult interaction in the classroom.

### ***3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications***

Parent Aware Program Standards work to ensure a well-prepared early childhood workforce by including indicators in each category to ensure and promote appropriate professional development and education for Early Childhood Educators. Program Standards are based on a progression of training and education that varies for caregivers/lead teachers, program directors/administrators, and education coordinators. In this way the Program Standards ensure that caregivers and educators at all levels have current knowledge and skills related to promoting school readiness across multiple domains. Participation in Minnesota's Professional Development Registry (see D2) is required for all staff in rated programs, and professional development plans are required for achieving the highest ratings.

### ***4) Family engagement strategies***

Parent Aware Program Standards include the following indicators that support family engagement: incorporating referral to early childhood health and developmental screening, family education, and family support programs; providing orientation to new families; providing observation and assessment results; and providing assistance to help families access additional support programs. In addition, the indicators address providing program information in the parent's primary language and completing training on working with families of different cultures

and socio-economic levels. Partnerships with Minnesota's Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) universal parent education program (see Priority 2) provide another avenue for Parent Aware-rated programs to promote family engagement in their children's development.

**5) *Health promotion practices***

Children's health is promoted in several Program Standards. Parent Aware promotes health and safety by requiring compliance with licensing rules and, at levels 2 through 4, programs conduct a self-assessment that is informed by the Environment Rating Scales. To ensure that health and behavioral screening occurs, ELD Programs at levels one and two provide families with contact information for Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening and Help Me Grow: Infant and Toddler Intervention and Preschool Special Education. To achieve levels three or four, programs must assist families with accessing each of these supports. ELD Programs at every level of the system must participate in the Minnesota Child and Adult Food Program or require completion of approved training on child nutrition by the Early Childhood Educators working for the program. In addition, all caregivers and lead teachers complete approved training on obesity prevention, including developmentally appropriate physical activities for young children.

**6) *Effective data practices***

Parent Aware recognizes that meaningful improvement of child outcomes is only possible through the use of effective data practices. Guidance on data privacy laws and requirements is embedded into rating system forms and into training on using and managing child assessment data. Standards on using child assessment data to inform instruction, using program assessments to guide program improvement, and making child assessment information available to parents, are all included in the Parent Aware Program Standards and indicators and are described in detail in the comprehensive assessment systems section above.

**PROGRAM STANDARDS—B1b**

Since its inception, Parent Aware has focused on development and implementation of clear, measurable, and meaningfully differentiated Program Standards that are based on research. The Program Standards tested when Parent Aware was piloted were based on three goals:

1. Ensure more children are ready for kindergarten by assuring that ELD Programs are of high quality;

2. Provide parents with transparent, understandable, and measurable consumer information about program quality; and
3. Promote accountability for increased private and public investments by using program quality indicators that are linked to positive child outcomes by research.

Programs participating in the Parent Aware pilot received a rating of 1 to 4 stars, based on the number of points achieved for meeting quality indicators. The rating process included observations and document review, resulting in a composite score of how programs rated on four categories of indicators: Family Partnerships, Teaching Materials and Strategies, Tracking Learning, and Training and Education.

At the conclusion of the pilot, Minnesota adopted revised Program Standards and related indicators (see Selection Criterion B1a and Appendices 9 - 12). The revised Parent Aware Program Standards and indicators are very similar in content and structure to the rating tool that was validated during the pilot phase. The revised Program Standards include four rating categories: Physical Health and Wellbeing, Teaching and Relationships, Tracking Learning, and Teacher Training and Education. Programs receive 1- to 4-star rating based on quality indicators. To earn a rating of 1 or 2 stars, programs must meet *all* required standards at each level (a “block” approach). Levels 3 and 4 can be achieved by meeting a minimum number of points required for each level. This shift from a rating system structured by points only to one that is a hybrid of blocks and points was informed by the Parent Aware pilot evaluation (Tout, et al., 2010b), which indicated the need for more differentiation in the lower versus higher star levels. Content experts’ (Minnesota Department of Human Services & Minnesota Department of Education, 2011; see Appendix 13) recommendations for increasing the rigor of the standards, while ensuring that ELD Programs have some flexibility in how they achieve higher ratings, also informed the change to this hybrid model.

Parent Aware is a single rating system that includes three pathways for programs to demonstrate their quality in light of the Program Standards. There are Program Standards for each center-based and licensed family child care programs as well as an Accelerated Pathway to Rating that allows accredited child care programs, Head Start, and public school-based pre-kindergarten programs (School Readiness programs) to complete an abbreviated application, which results in a 4-star rating.

The accelerated pathway concept was developed for and included in the Parent Aware pilot as a strategy for addressing the concern of putting additional burdens on ELD Programs that were already meeting Head Start Performance Standards, School Readiness program requirements, requirements for IDEA-funded Parts B/619 and C programs, and/or that had undergone a rigorous accreditation process (e.g., National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation). Including this process in the pilot and going forward is also a way to keep the system cost-effective in terms of not providing additional quality support dollars to programs that have already established their quality. This, however, is not a free pass. The final reason that Minnesota is confidently pursuing this strategy is to bring all ELD Programs into a single TQRIS and its associated evaluation, and to do so in a way that strikes a balance between respecting the unique strengths that each program brings and our need to develop a common, statewide system. As part of the pilot we included evaluation questions to discern whether programs that arrived at a 4-star rating via an accelerated process showed the same patterns in children's progress toward school readiness as 4-star programs that had undergone the full rating process. The most recent Parent Aware evaluation report showed no significant difference between these two pathways to 4 stars (Tout, et al., 2010b). Goal 2 of our High-Quality Plan refines the Accelerated Pathway to Rating process to assure that those ratings continue to meaningfully differentiate program quality levels as demonstrated by child outcome data gathered through the Parent Aware evaluation (see B5), while minimizing duplication across different types of standards for ELD Programs participating in Parent Aware.

Appendix 14 describes the rationale for the updates that were made to the Parent Aware rating tool that was piloted, including documentation on how the revision increases clarity, measurability and differentiation, and more closely reflects the factors that research indicates improve children's learning outcomes.

#### **LINKAGE TO MINNESOTA'S LICENSING SYSTEM—B1c**

Minnesota requires that most child care centers, privately operated part-day preschool programs, non-school-based Head Start programs, and home-based family child care programs be licensed under state law and rule. Minnesota's licensors are often the first line of technical assistance programs have on the path to quality. Minnesota's child care licensors also work with the CCR&R system to develop meaningful training opportunities based on their experience in the field.

The Parent Aware TQRIS is linked to the Minnesota licensing system by requiring, as applicable, ELD Programs to be licensed and in good standing. In order to be rated, programs may not have any licensing sanctions, may not be operating under a conditional license, and may not have any child maltreatment determinations. As described in Priority 2 and in Selection Criterion B4, the State Plan includes multiple incentives and supports to help programs move from providing care as legally unlicensed providers (Family, Friend, and Neighbor programs) to licensed status. Once licensing has been achieved, programs become eligible for voluntary participation in Parent Aware.

## **HIGH-QUALITY PLAN**

### **GOALS AND ACTIVITIES**

#### **Goal 1: Continuously improve Quality Standards.**

Establishing a regular review cycle for the Parent Aware Program Standards and Indicators will put in place a planned cycle of information gathering and continuous improvement that is transparent and predictable for all stakeholders.

*Activity 1.1:* Identify criteria for review.

Prior to each round of review, decision makers will revisit and agree upon the criteria for high-quality standards and indicators, used in the first revision process and described above.

*Activity 1.2:* Gather information from multiple sources.

The regular review and any potential revisions that result will:

- Utilize ongoing evaluation and validation studies to inform both the content and the structure of the rating process (see B5 for further description of the validation process);
- Solicit public comment through the Early Learning Council;
- Track development of new validated tools that could be considered for inclusion in the Program Standards. For example, the current Program Standards include use of CLASS™ assessment tool to measure the quality of Adult-Child Interactions in licensed, center-based preschool and toddler classrooms. As the infant version of the CLASS™ tool becomes available, training becomes available, and observers are trained, Minnesota will consider use of the CLASS™ tool in infant classrooms as well;
- Review the latest research in early childhood development, including measurement of program quality through validated observational tools. For example, national research currently underway on the use of the CLASS™ tool in family child care settings is of

interest to Minnesota. When sufficient information is available to inform use of the tool fairly and appropriately in this type of setting, Minnesota will consider its use in family child care settings as well;

- Vet future draft revisions by national content experts.

**Activity 1.3:** Revise Program Standards and indicators, as needed.

Based on the information gathered in Activity 1.2, Program Standards and indicators will be revised, as warranted, to reflect Minnesota's commitment to continuously increasing ELD Program quality to make meaningful differences in the outcomes of Children with High Needs.

**Goal 2: Refine the Accelerated Pathway to Rating process.**

The Accelerated Pathway to Rating process will be refined on an ongoing basis to ensure that the ratings meaningfully differentiate program quality levels as demonstrated by child outcome data gathered through the Parent Aware evaluation (see B5), while minimizing duplication across different types of standards for ELD Programs participating in Parent Aware.

**Activity 2.1:** Crosswalk the Parent Aware Program Standards and other existing program standards.

Careful crosswalks will be conducted with the Head Start performance standards, the School Readiness program requirements, IDEA program requirements, and national accreditation standards on an ongoing basis to facilitate an understanding of how those standards relate to the Parent Aware program standards, and in particular, which Parent Aware Program Standards and indicators are automatically met by virtue of a program's existing set of standards.

**Activity 2.2:** Refine the Accelerated Pathway to Rating process.

Based on the results of Activity 2.1 and evaluation results on children's outcomes by rating types (full rating and accelerated pathway), Minnesota will continue to refine the Accelerated Pathway to Rating process. The number of indicators required for program types in the Accelerated Pathway to Rating process may be increased or decreased depending on the evaluation results. In addition, a process for ensuring inter-rater reliability will be developed. Minnesota is fully committed to exploring whether the Accelerated Pathway to Rating is associated with desired child outcomes, and, if it is not, exploring alternatives to this approach, including full rating of all programs.

### Realistic Timeline

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
B1. Statewide TQRIS	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Goal 1: Continuously improve Quality Standards.</b>																
1.1: Identify review criteria																
1.2: Gather information																
1.3: Revise Program Standards & Indicators																
<b>Goal 2: Refine Accelerated Pathway to Rating process</b>																
2.1: Crosswalk program standards																
2.2: Refine the accelerated process																

### Responsible Parties

Identifying criteria for regular, planned review of the Parent Aware Program Standards (Goal 1, Activity 1) will be carried out by the Department of Human Services, in coordination with the Departments of Education and Health. The state agencies, the Early Learning Council, and the Parent Aware evaluator will carry out the collection and review of information needed during each review cycle (Goal 1, Activity 2). Any revisions of the Program Standards will be implemented by the Department of Human Services, in coordination with the Departments of Education and Health.

For Goal 2, Refining the Accelerated Pathway to Rating process, Activities 1-2 will be implemented by key staff in the Department of Human Services, in coordination with the Department of Education, and in consultation with members of the Early Learning Council with expertise in and knowledge about the different types of ELD Programs included in the Accelerated Pathway to Rating process.

### Appropriate Financial Resources

Note the financial resources listed here support all Parent Aware TQRIS activities, including B1, B2, B3 and B5:

**\$9,760,457 Public Funds (CCDF)**



**\$7,600,000 Private Funds**

**\$7,978,232 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$25,338,689 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

For more detail on this budget, please see A4 and related budget spreadsheets.

### Supporting Evidence

- Appendix 9: Parent Aware Standards
- Appendices 10-12: Parent Aware Indicators and Scoring
- Appendix 13: Development Process for Parent Aware Standards and Indicators
- Appendix 14: Pilot to Revised Program Standard Rationale

### Performance Measures

<b>Table (B)(1)-1: Status of all Program Standards currently used in the state</b>							
<b>List each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the state; specify which programs in the state use the standards</b>	<b>Program Standards* Elements</b>						
	<i>If the Program Standards address the element, place an "X" in that box</i>						
	Early Learning and Development Standards	Comprehensive Assessment Systems	Qualified workforce	Family engagement	Health promotion	Effective data practices	Other
<b>Parent Aware Standards</b> Programs that use the standards: 1) State-funded preschool 2) Early Head Start and Head Start 3) Programs funded under Title I of ESEA 4) Licensed private preschool 5) Licensed child care centers 6) Licensed family child care programs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>The Parent Aware standards are used by all of the programs for quality improvement through training and technical assistance. However, all of the indicators are not measured for all program types in the</i>							

<b>Table (B)(1)-1: Status of all Program Standards currently used in the state</b>							
<b>List each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the state; specify which programs in the state use the standards</b>	<b>Program Standards* Elements</b>						
	<i>If the Program Standards address the element, place an "X" in that box</i>						
	Early Learning and Development Standards	Comprehensive Assessment Systems	Qualified workforce	Family engagement	Health promotion	Effective data practices	Other
<p><i>Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System to receive a rating. State-funded preschool, Early Head Start and Head Start, Programs funded under Title I of ESEA, and accredited centers and accredited family child care programs are eligible to apply for an accelerated rating. The accelerated rating measures two indicators included in the following Program Standards Elements: Early Learning and Development Standards and Comprehensive Assessment System.</i></p> <p><i>*Please refer to the definition of Program Standards for more information on the elements.</i></p>							

### **Addressing Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs**

Parent Aware is available to ELD Programs of all types. The Accelerated Pathway to Rating process, refined during this grant period, will enable ELD Programs already meeting other required program standards to participate in Parent Aware in ways that do not require duplication of monitoring or reporting. In addition, Minnesota's innovative strategies for improving the quality of legally unlicensed home-based child care providers—or Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers—are further evolving to include training requirements for FFN caregivers who serve children receiving CCDF funded child care assistance (Minnesota Statutes section 119B.232). The required training is aligned with the foundational training required to become licensed and voluntarily participate in Parent Aware (see Priority 2).

### **Meeting Needs of Children with High Needs (Including Special Populations)**

The focus of Parent Aware is to improve the outcomes of Children with High Needs by improving program quality in ELD Programs of all types. To accomplish this, this section continuously strengthens our research-based, tiered Program Standards.

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

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

(1) State-funded preschool programs;

(2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;

(3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;

(4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and

(5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

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

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

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

**(B)(2) Promoting participation in the state's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.**

**PROMOTING PARTICIPATION OF ALL PUBLICLY-FUNDED PROGRAMS—B2a**

As described in B1, Parent Aware includes ELD Programs of all types. Our High-Quality Plan to maximize participation in Parent Aware will build on this fact and scale up the use of our proven strategies for program recruitment through the use of incentives (e.g., quality improvement supports, coaching, etc.). Recruitment efforts will be targeted to programs that serve large numbers of children receiving CCDF subsidy dollars and higher numbers of Children with High Needs. In addition, we include a special focus on increasing the number of children with disabilities and children receiving CCDF subsidy dollars served in highly rated programs. The result of these efforts will be substantial increases in the number of publically funded programs participating in Parent Aware. Performance targets include: an increase in participation by Early Head Start and Head Start from 10% today to 78% by the end of 2015; an increase in participation by programs funded by IDEA, Part C from 9% today to 85% by the end of 2015; and an increase in participation by programs receiving CCDF funds from 7% today to 35% by the end of 2015.

**IMPLEMENTING POLICIES TO PROMOTE PARTICIPATION—B2a**

Historically, Minnesota has made strong efforts to engage in policies and practices that support publicly funded program participation in Parent Aware. In 2005, two years before the pilot began, Minnesota began offering an intensive training program to prepare early childhood practitioners for a future TQRIS. *Not by Chance: Child Care that Supports School Readiness* was launched as a progressive training series that was designed to increase understanding and use of Minnesota's endorsed quality improvement tools (e.g., Early Learning and Development Standards, etc.). This training was attended by over 1,100 providers. Elements of this program will be incorporated into basic outreach and information sessions that will take place as part of recruitment efforts as Parent Aware scales up.

To jump start quality improvement efforts in programs before they entered the Parent Aware pilot, The Department of Human Services launched Building Quality. The program provides ELD Programs with coaching and training to help them prepare for Parent Aware. With the addition of private funding from Greater Twin Cities United Way and through a strong partnership with CCR&R agencies, over 250 child care centers and family child care homes

serving Children with High Needs, most of which received Child Care Development Fund program funds, participated. Results of the Child Trends evaluation of the Twin Cities Metro effort indicated that participating programs went on to enter Parent Aware at higher rating levels than did programs that hadn't participated (Isner, Soli, Rothenberg, & Tout, 2011).

The Department of Human Services, in continued partnership with the Greater Twin Cities United Way, is offering an updated version of Building Quality. The intensive quality improvement support program will be based on the successes described above and enhanced through our High-Quality Plan to include a strong focus on Health Promotion Practices (B1a) through the use of Child Care Health Consultants. The lead Child Care Health Consultant at the Department of Health will work with the Department of Human Services to develop new Building Quality elements, focused on Health Promotion Practices, which will be made available statewide through Minnesota's Center for Professional Development (D1). In addition, in the Early Learning Challenge Target Communities (Target Communities), Child Care Health Consultants will provide care coordination for children with special health care needs, acting as liaisons between families, primary care providers and ELD Programs. In addition, they will provide ELD Programs with technical assistance on a range of issues related to the health and safety of children. These may be as fundamental as helping staff determine ideal placement of eating areas and diaper changing tables in facilities, or as technical as performing on-site assessments of hygiene and safety practices, physical activity, and nutrition guidance.

### **HELPING FAMILIES AFFORD HIGH-QUALITY CHILD CARE—B2b**

Minnesota families have benefited from a range of policies and practices, some quite innovative in scope, to help Children with High Needs access high-quality ELD Programs. As context, it is important to note that the majority of Minnesota children receiving Child Care Assistance (all of whom are considered Children with High Needs) attend licensed programs, with 40% in center based care and 32% in licensed family child care homes, while approximately 21 % use FFN care, and 6% attend license exempt center based programs (Minnesota Department of Human Services, 2011).

The Child Care Assistance Program uses several strategies to help families afford high-quality care. Family copayments are based only on income and family size, not on the cost of care. Copayments are adjusted annually to reflect changes in state median income and range from 0-14% of a family's gross monthly income.

The Child Care Assistance Program offers maximum payment rates that are 15% higher for centers that are accredited by identified organizations and for family child care providers that are either accredited by identified organizations or hold certain educational credentials (Minnesota Statutes section 119B.13, subdivision 3a). The rate differential increases the maximum amount of payment for the accredited center-based programs in Parent Aware and for some family child care providers who participate in Parent Aware. The policy encourages family access to high-quality programs by covering more of the actual costs.

Head Start programs and their partner family child care homes and centers can be reimbursed for a Child Care Assistance Program full-day payment when certain conditions are met and when a child is eligible for a full day of services. The policy is an incentive to programs to offer full-day, integrated comprehensive child care services by allowing layering of Child Care Assistance and Head Start funds.

Three of Minnesota's bold approaches to helping families with Children with High Needs afford high-quality ELD Programs were rigorously evaluated: the Saint Paul Early Childhood Scholarship Program, the Pre-Kindergarten Allowances, and the School Readiness Connections program. Those evaluations form the basis for additional strategies to help families with Children with High Needs in the Target Communities access high-quality ELD Programs, as described in B4b.

## **HIGH-QUALITY PLAN**

To inform this High-Quality Plan the Department of Human Services conducted a analysis that considered the following (at the county level): annual CCAP expenditures, average monthly children served with CCAP, number of licensed providers, and percent of children living in poverty (see Appendices 15 – 18). The results of this analysis are used to prioritize where intensive recruitment and quality improvement supports will be deployed.

## **GOALS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Goal 1: Offer the Accelerated Pathway to Rating statewide.**

There are three types of programs eligible for an Accelerated Pathway to Rating (see B1): accredited center and home-based child care, Head Start, and School Readiness programs. This pathway will be made available to eligible programs across the state by the end of 2011.

The Accelerated Pathway to Rating allows these programs to become rated at 4 stars based on their conformance with their existing program standards (e.g., Head Start Performance Standards, etc.), as well as measurement of two additional indicators:

- **Teaching and Relationships:** Programs must use a curriculum that is aligned with the Minnesota's Early Learning and Development Standards, and all lead teaching staff must have completed approved training on implementing curriculum.
- **Assessment of Child Progress:** Programs must conduct assessment using an approved tool with all children at least twice per year and in at least the following domains: social emotional development, language and literacy, and mathematical thinking and physical development. All lead teaching staff must have completed approved training on use of the assessment.

**Activity 1.1:** Recruit targeted programs to participate in the Accelerated Pathway to Rating.

Minnesota will use the CCR&R outreach infrastructure and Parent Aware marketing efforts (see B3) to recruit all programs eligible for the Accelerated Pathway to Rating, focusing first on intensive recruitment efforts of eligible ELD Programs in our Target Communities. As demonstrated in the Parent Aware pilot (Tout, et al., 2010b), recruiting programs to participate in an accelerated rating process is uncomplicated and yields high participation (see performance measures Table B2c). This will be accomplished through intentional outreach to eligible programs, making them aware of the benefits of participation in Parent Aware and explaining how the Accelerated Pathway to Rating provides a simple, straightforward way for their program to become rated, and thus for parents to recognize their quality.

In areas outside the Target Communities, recruitment to the accelerated pathway will first focus on programs serving large numbers of children receiving subsidy payments through the Child Care Assistance Program. Next, recruitment will expand to other programs serving large numbers of Children with High Needs. In the Twin Cities Metro Area, this effort will be supported by the Greater Twin Cities United Way's commitment of private funds to support child care accreditation as a pathway for participation in Parent Aware (see Priority 5).

**Activity 1.2:** Provide supports and incentives for programs to participate in the Accelerated Pathway to Rating.

Programs seeking an accelerated pathway will be motivated, in part, to participate in Parent Aware because it will make them eligible for high-quality, no cost training. Training

related to using curriculum that is aligned with the Minnesota's Early Learning and Development Standards and related to use of approved assessment tools will be available to staff in programs that take advantage of the Automatic Pathway to Rating. In addition, programs will be encouraged and eligible to participate in fee-for-service trainings related to other Program Standards.

**Goal 2: Increase market penetration of Parent Aware statewide.**

Building on the base of programs rated during the Parent Aware pilot phase and the targeted recruiting efforts that will happen across the state in the latter part of 2011 (see Goal 1) we will increase the penetration of Parent Aware statewide.

**Activity 2.1:** Recruit targeted programs to participate in Parent Aware.

Initial, intensive recruitment efforts will be focused in our Target Communities, chosen in part due to their large concentrations of Children with High Needs. Early Learning Challenge grant funds will be used to quickly scale up recruitment infrastructure in additional counties targeted first to programs serving large numbers of children receiving subsidy payments through the Minnesota Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) (Minnesota's CCDF funded child care subsidy program) and then to other programs serving large numbers of Children with High Needs. Additional efforts will be undertaken to encourage existing Parent Aware participant programs to incorporate updated Program Standards (see B1).

**Activity 2.2:** Provide a continuum of supports as incentives for programs serving Children with High Needs to participate in Parent Aware.

A continuum of quality improvement supports will scale up in concert with the recruitment process described in Activity 2.1. Availability of quality supports will be intentionally targeted to programs serving large numbers of Children with High Needs.

A combination of orientations to the Parent Aware Program Standards and training designed to help ELD Programs implement the Program Standards will precede intensive recruitment efforts in a given geography. Next, programs that seek ratings and serve higher numbers of Children with High Needs will be eligible to receive support through the Building Quality program for six months prior to Parent Aware entry. The process will include an initial self-assessment to help the program gauge how many of the Program Standards and indicators they are currently achieving. Programs will then work with a quality coach (all areas) and a Child Care Health Consultant (Target Communities only) to produce a quality improvement plan



with steps for helping them meet the necessary standards and indicators prior to beginning the rating process. Free training and coaching will be provided to help programs implement the goals outlined in their quality improvement plans. In addition, culturally-responsive coaching services and supports will be provided to ELD Programs in diverse communities in order to reach programs serving higher numbers of Children with High Needs. This strategy proved effective when tested in the Parent Aware pilot.

Available quality support resources will be targeted first to programs serving higher numbers of Children with High Needs. Other programs, those serving higher income populations of children, will be encouraged to use a self-assessment that documents Program Standards and helps them develop their own quality improvement plan. These programs will be eligible for training and coaching to help them implement the Program Standards after beginning the rating process; in these cases the bulk of support will become available after the first rating is issued.

Head Start and School Readiness programs will be encouraged to train their staff on the Program Standards and to develop coaches working locally. These programs will be eligible to participate in the training offered through Building Quality; however, coaching support will be reserved for programs that are not eligible for the Accelerated Pathway to Rating.

**Goal 3: Increase the number and percentage of children with disabilities served in highly rated programs.**

Many school-based preschools, Head Start programs, and child care programs with Parent Aware ratings provide direct services to children with IEPs or IFSPs. Minnesota has been very intentional in its efforts to build capacity within ELD Programs participating in Parent Aware to support and embrace young learners with disabilities. The updated set of Parent Aware Program Standards has taken this goal one step further by incorporating new standards and indicators specifically designed to strengthen the ability of rated programs to serve children with IEPs and IFSPs. For example, one of the indicators included in the rating process is that all lead teachers have at least 4 hours of approved training or equivalent coaching on children's developmental disabilities, special health care needs, and behavioral challenges. In addition, the Assessment of Child Progress Program Standard includes indicators related to engaging and sharing assessment information with a child's IEP or IFSP team, with parental permission. Other indicators related to providing high-quality early education will also result in positive outcomes for children with disabilities. For example, the indicators related to improving adult-child

interactions by boosting programs' scores on the CLASS™ observation will improve all children's outcomes, including those of children with disabilities.

**Activity 3.1:** Recruit more programs serving children with an IEP or IFSP to participate in the TQRIS.

**Activity 3.2:** Work with highly rated programs to increase their capacity to serve children with disabilities and help to establish relationships with school districts to encourage them to work with families with children with an IEP or IFSP to select highly rated programs. Technical assistance provided by Child Care Health Consultants in the Target Communities will enhance ELD Programs' capacity to serve children with disabilities.

**Activity 3.3:** Convene a group of stakeholders with expertise serving children with disabilities to discuss procedures for documenting the new standards related to serving children with an IEP and IFSP and strategies for helping programs that serve children with special needs implement the new standards.

**Goal 4: Increase access to highly rated programs for children participating in the Child Care Assistance Program.**

Key aspects of our High-Quality Plan for increasing access to highly rated programs for children receiving CCAP subsidies are outlined in B4, Goal 5. In addition, we will work to enhance public policy to increase access to quality ELD Programs for Children with High Needs.

**Activity 4.1:** Work to encourage Parent Aware participation by providers who care for significant numbers of children receiving CCAP, including through increased reimbursement.

Reimbursement changes would require legislative action to expand Minnesota's current tiered reimbursement policy.

**Activity 4.2:** Incent the majority of providers paid by CCAP into Parent Aware by requiring rating as a condition of payment (implemented after Activity 4.1). This change would require legislative action to change current CCAP policy.

**Realistic Timeline**

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>B2. Promote Participation in Parent Aware</b>																
<b>Goal 1: Offer Accelerated Pathway to Rating Statewide</b>																
1.1: Recruit targeted programs																
1.2: Provide supports as incentives																
<b>Goal 2: Increase Market Penetration of Parent Aware</b>																
2.1 Recruit targeted programs and 2.2 Provide supports as incentives																
a. Expand to 8 counties																
b. Expand to 22 counties																
c. Expand to 38 counties																
d. Expand to all counties																
<b>Goal 3: Increase #/% of children with disabilities served in highly rated programs</b>																
3.1 Recruit more programs serving children w/disabilities																
3.2 Increase program capacity to serve children w/disabilities																
3.3 Convene stakeholder group																
<b>Goal 4: Increase access for CCAP recipients to highly rated programs</b>																
4.1 Align CCAP policies and Parent Aware																
4.2 Plan to link CCAP to Parent Aware participation																

**Responsible Parties**

Staff at the Departments of Education, Human Services, and Health will provide increased availability of accelerated ratings (Goal 1, Activity 1), with recruitment conducted by staff at the CCR&R agencies. Program orientations and awareness trainings will be conducted by the CCR&R system in a format approved by both agencies. Staff from the Department of Education will collaborate with CCR&R staff to reach out to Head Start and School Readiness programs.

Quality improvement supports will be provided to programs seeking accelerated ratings by the CCR&R system (Goal 1, Activity 2), in close coordination with the Minnesota Centers for Excellence, described in more detail in Section D2.

Expansion of the availability of Parent Aware (Goal 2, Activity 1) will be provided by staff at the Department of Human Services, in coordination with the Department of Education, with recruitment conducted by staff at the CCR&R agencies. Program orientations and awareness trainings will be conducted by the CCR&R system in a format approved by both agencies.

Quality improvement supports will be provided to programs seeking ratings by the CCR&R system (Goal 2, Activity 2), in close coordination with the Minnesota Centers for Excellence. In the Target Communities, field Child Care Health Consultants will work with the CCR&R quality coaches. The lead Child Care Health Consultant in the Department of Health will work with staff at the Department of Human Services to enhance the Building Quality model to include Health Promotion Practices.

Goal 3 (all activities): Key staff at the Department of Education, in partnership with staff from the Departments of Health and Human Services, will be responsible for all aspects of implementation of key activities leading to goal attainment.

The proposals for policy changes designed to increase access to highly rated programs for children participating in the Child Care Assistance Program (Goal 4, Activities 1 and 2) will be developed by policy staff at the Department of Human Services and other policy staff at the Departments of Education and Health.

**Appropriate Financial Resources**

Note the financial resources listed here support all Parent Aware TQRIS activities, including B1, B2, B3 and B5:

**\$9,760,457 Public Funds (CCDF)**

**\$7,600,000 Private Funds**

**\$7,978,232 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$25,338,689 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

For more detail on this budget, please see A4 and related budget spreadsheets.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Appendices 15 - 18: maps showing our analysis of where high-need children and CCAP programs are located.
- Letters of support: Association of Minnesota Counties, Center for Inclusive Child Care, Governor's Interagency Coordinating Council, Greater Twin Cities United Way, Minnesota CCR&R Network, Minnesota Head Start Association, PACER.

### **PERFORMANCE MEASURES—B2c**

The targets below reflect Minnesota's experience that offering a robust package of incentives, including quality improvement incentives and access funding linked to program quality (see B4), and recruiting programs to participate in an Accelerated Pathway to Rating will result in strong participation in Parent Aware.

<b>Performance Measures for (B)(2)(c): Increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>											
<b>Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State</b>	<b>Number of programs in the State</b>	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		<b>Baseline (Today)</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2012</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2013</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2014</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2015</b>	
		<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
State-funded preschool <i>Specify:</i> school-based preschool programs funded by Minnesota's School Readiness Program	509	53	10%	158	31%	193	38%	255	50%	330	65%
Early Head Start and Head Start <sup>15</sup>	232	23	10%	99	42%	138	58%	171	72%	184	78%
Programs funded by IDEA, Part C	150	14	9%	18	12%	46	31%	87	58%	127	85%
Programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619	850	105	12%	232	27%	307	36%	400	47%	483	57%
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	30	23	77%	24	80%	25	83%	27	90%	29	97%
Programs receiving from CCDF funds	4,391	329	7%	360	8%	652	15%	1,100	25%	1,520	35%
Other <i>Describe:</i> licensed	8,493	9	0.1%	80	0.9%	499	6%	1,075	13%	1,666	20%

Other <i>Describe:</i> licensed centers and licensed family child care programs not receiving CCDF funds.	8,493	9	0.1%	80	0.9%	499	6%	1,075	13%	1,666	20%
<p><i>"Program" is defined as the building site where direct services are delivered. For programs funded by IDEA, Part C, and IDEA, Part B, section 619, "program" is defined as a building site where one or more children with IEPs or IFSPs are placed by a school district ECSE program.</i></p> <p><i>For state-funded preschool, the number of programs was estimated based on the total number of districts offering Minnesota's School Readiness program, and an estimated average number of sites across districts. The baseline number is actual.</i></p> <p><i>For Early Head Start and Head Start, the number of programs was based on the results of a survey of Head Start programs conducted by the CCR&amp;R system. The baseline number is actual.</i></p> <p><i>For programs funded by IDEA Part B, the number of programs and the baseline number are both estimated. Because Head Start programs are mandated to serve children with disabilities, it is assumed that all Head Start programs have at least one child with an IEP or IFSP placed by the school district ECSE program. It is assumed that 80% of school-based and Title I preschool programs enroll at least one child with an IEP or IFSP, and that approximately 10% of child care programs enroll at least one child with an IEP or IFSP placed by a school district ECSE program. For programs funded by IDEA Part C, because so few children in IDEA, Part C are served in settings other than home-based special education services, small numbers of child care programs were assumed. No other program type was assumed to serve this age group.</i></p> <p><i>For programs funded under Title I of ESEA, the number of programs was estimated based on the number of children reported to be served by school districts. In many cases these programs are also state-funded preschool and/or Head Start sites. The baseline number is actual.</i></p> <p><i>For programs receiving CCDF funds, the number of programs is actual based on the number of Minnesota and Tribal licensed programs issued a payment in February or March of 2011. This number includes 13 licensed Head Start and Early Head Start programs paid during this time period. The baseline number of programs receiving CCDF funds is an estimate based on the statistic that 84% of Parent Aware programs reported currently caring for children participating in the Child Care Assistance Program in a survey conducted by the CCR&amp;R system in 2010. The data from the survey was used by the Parent Aware evaluation and reported in the 2010 evaluation report. The numbers of programs was then adjusted for changes in the numbers of programs participating in Parent Aware in 2011.</i></p> <p><i>For licensed centers and licensed family child care programs not receiving CCDF funds, the number of programs is the total number of licensed programs, based on data collected by the CCR&amp;R system, minus</i></p>											

**Addressing Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs**

Accredited child care programs, Head Start, and school-based preschool programs will initially be allowed to demonstrate use of existing program standards—including accreditation standards, Head Start performance standards, and School Readiness standards—through the provision of Accelerated Pathway to Rating for these program types. Over time, Parent Aware evaluation and validation studies may change how Accelerated Pathway to Rating is implemented. In addition, Goal 3 will recruit more programs serving children with an IEP or IFSP to participate in Parent Aware.

**Meeting Needs of Children with High Needs (Including Special Populations)**

Staff will focus recruitment efforts on ELD Programs serving Children with High Needs as Parent Aware expands statewide. Goals 3 and 4, above, and Section B4 describe more thoroughly how families with Children with High Needs are helped to access high-quality programs.

The goals and activities presented in this section outline a bold State Plan for promoting participation in Parent Aware and for connecting Children with High Needs with highly rated programs. While the performance targets are ambitious, Minnesota's experience with Parent Aware, combined with the enhancements presented throughout this Plan, give us confidence that implementation will be successful.



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

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

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

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

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

Minnesota has developed and implemented a solid process for rating and monitoring the quality of ELD Programs, which includes use of on-site observations using the CLASS™ tool (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008). Our High-Quality Plan will strengthen our existing process by establishing rigorous training for rating staff and establishing an upgraded Parent Aware data system. The plan for continuous improvement of Parent Aware presented in B1 will also contribute to these efforts. Minnesota is tremendously strong in the area of making rating and licensing information publically available, we will continue these efforts as part of our High-Quality Plan.

**USING A VALID AND RELIABLE TOOL FOR MONITORING PROGRAMS—B3a  
Parent Aware Rating Process**

The Parent Aware rating process requires participating ELD Programs to apply via submission of a Quality Documentation Packet, which assembles a portfolio of evidence documenting their progress toward meeting the Parent Aware Program Standards and indicators. Programs receive assistance in completing their portfolios from a trained quality coach. The coach ensures that programs understand the standards and the types of documentation that are acceptable in meeting each standard.

In addition to submitting documentation of their existing quality, center-based programs initially receive on-site observations using the CLASS™ tool (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008). As research becomes available on using CLASS™ in family child care settings, observations will be conducted in those settings as well. Observers receive extensive training through staff “anchors” who have been trained by Teachstone, the organization that provides training and support on the CLASS™. Observers must adhere to rigorous reliability standards: they must demonstrate 90% *exact* agreement on the CLASS™ items on three successive occasions, and reliability is checked every 10<sup>th</sup> visit or every three months (whichever comes first). Data from the documentation portfolios and observation reports are used to assess whether a program is meeting required standards.

Quality Raters use CLASS™ scores and data collected from the Quality Documentation Packet to calculate a quality rating. As Parent Aware scales up, additional Quality Raters will be hired and trained, and an updated process for measuring and documenting inter-rater reliability will be implemented, modeled after the CLASS™ observer reliability process described above.

This will include rigorous training and periodic reliability checks between Quality Raters and the anchor Quality Rater. Participating ELD Programs will be fully rated every other year to maintain their quality rating.

Programs eligible for the Accelerated Pathway to Rating (accredited child care programs, Head Start, and School Readiness programs) will be rated based on conformance with their existing program standards (e.g., Head Start Performance Standards, etc.), as well as measurement of two additional indicators (described fully in B2, Goal 1). ELD Programs on the accelerated pathway are rated every other year, the process for ensuring inter-rater reliability is consistent with the process for ensuring inter-rater reliability for fully rated programs. As described in Selection Criteria B1, Goal 2, the Accelerated Pathway to Rating process will be refined during 2013, the frequency of ratings and the process for ensuring inter-rater reliability will be considered at that time.

### **PROVIDING QUALITY RATING AND LICENSING INFORMATION TO PARENTS— B3b**

Parent Aware is unique in the nation because of its intentional focus on supporting parents' early care and education decisions. Throughout the development and implementation of Parent Aware, special emphasis was placed on developing and promoting a rating tool that would be useful to parents. All aspects of the program, from the program name to the website and related forms, brochures and materials, were designed to make the program as attractive to and easily understood by parents as possible.

On the Parent Aware website, parents have quick and easy access to a search engine that retrieves programs by variety of search parameters (see Parent Aware web pages in Appendix 19). Parents can learn about the rating tool by visiting the "About Parent Aware" page, where they will find an easy-to-read summary of how the ratings are calculated and displayed. Information is available in English, Hmong, Somali and Spanish. Parents visiting the Parent Aware website who have questions about the rating system are encouraged to call a CCR&R specialist for more information and assistance with searching for a high-quality program. Referral information is provided in a way that is aligned with the quality ratings.

All programs participating in Parent Aware have access to marketing support, including a marketing kit and information on ratings, provided through Minnesota's CCR&R system. In addition, using materials created by the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation, the newly-formed

private non-profit, Parent Aware for School Readiness, will continue to use private funding to market the program through ad campaigns on radio and billboards, in newspapers, and through other targeted media outlets (see Priority 5).

Minnesota has developed a number of strategies for outreach and assistance in using quality ratings with parents of Children with High Needs. For example, during the Pre-kindergarten Allowance and Early Childhood Scholarship pilot programs (see B4), staff assigned to help families apply for an allowance or scholarship provided targeted support to parents to help them find placements in highly rated programs for their children.

Parents in Minnesota also have online access to information about program licensing history. The Licensing Information Lookup website provides licensing status, compliance reports, and public summaries of maltreatment investigations (sample web page in Appendix 20). Parents are encouraged to use this website in combination with Parent Aware ratings to make an informed decision.

## **HIGH-QUALITY PLAN**

### **GOALS AND ACTIVITIES**

#### **Goal 1: Ensure ongoing validity and reliability in the Parent Aware rating process.**

*Activity 1.1:* Establish rigorous training and reliability procedures for staff conducting observations.

As Parent Aware scales up and additional rating staff are trained, the Department of Human Services will work together with the University of Minnesota's Assessment and Training Center. As part of the process, training and reliability procedures will be reinforced and improved. Observational staff will be trained by anchors to achieve 90% exact reliability on all observational tools used in the rating system and the evaluation/validation.

*Activity 1.2:* Establish rigorous training, reliability, and data management procedures for staff conducting document review and establishing ratings.

Rigorous training and supervision will be in place to ensure that Quality Raters are prepared to follow the guidelines developed for rating programs on the standards and indicators. Data management procedures, such as double entry of 10% of data and data checking and cleaning, will be monitored closely, and staff will be retrained on a regular basis. If data checking shows accuracy falling below 95%, additional quality control measures will be implemented, including increased double entry and increased training.

**Activity 1.3:** Develop a comprehensive TQRIS data system with enhanced functionality to support Parent Aware.

The existing Parent Aware database has limited functionality; its focus is collecting, storing, and computing ratings based on the Program Standards. To best support Parent Aware, a more comprehensive data system with broader functionality is needed. This Plan develops a cross-agency QRIS data system that is web-based, with enhanced functionality, including the ability to: 1) calculate quality ratings based on the updated program standards and indicators; 2) track data on all types of quality improvement supports, including coaching and incentives; and 3) track Children with High Needs and tie this information to the characteristics of Early Childhood Educators and ELD Programs. The data system will be closely coordinated with or will build onto an existing database to ensure the development of a single, cross-agency solution (see E2). When necessary, automatic data feeds from related databases will be used to share programmatic data on a daily basis.

**Goal 2: Continue and expand marketing and outreach to families, particularly those with Children with High Needs.**

**Activity 2.1:** Tie expansion of marketing efforts to the Parent Aware recruitment plan outlined in B2 Goals 1 and 2.

The non-profit organization Parent Aware for School Readiness will privately-fund and -direct marketing of Parent Aware across the state (see Priority 5).

**Activity 2.2:** Integrate Parent Aware information in the Minnesota Parents Know website and other outreach programs.

Minnesota Parents Know is Minnesota's state-sponsored website for high-quality information for parents, providing trusted parenting information, resources, and activities to families. It also serves as the portal for the online Minnesota Help Me Grow program, Minnesota's Infant and Toddler Intervention system. Each of the websites will provide links to Parent Aware so that parents can access needed information seamlessly.

Parents applying to a Head Start or School Readiness programs will also receive information on Parent Aware. In addition, the Early Childhood Family Education program, available in all Minnesota school districts, is well positioned to present information on Parent Aware to participating families as part of transitioning their target audience, Children with High Needs ages birth to three, to high-quality child care.

**Activity 2.3:** Continue targeted marketing and outreach to families receiving Child Care Assistance.

Parents who are applying for the Child Care Assistance Program are encouraged by county-level child care workers to contact their local CCR&R agency for help finding and selecting child care. Parents also provide brochures in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali encouraging parents receiving Child Care Assistance to use the Parent Aware ratings to inform their decisions. Early Learning Challenge grant funds will be used to develop a new Parent Toolkit that is aligned with the Parent Aware Program Standards. The tool-kit will be used by child care workers to inform parents about ELD Program quality and how to find it in their community using Parent Aware.

**Realistic Timeline**

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>B3. Rating and Monitoring Programs</b>																
<b>Goal 1: Ensure ongoing validity and reliability in Parent Aware.</b>																
1.1: Rigorous training & reliability procedures for observers																
1.2: Rigorous training & reliability for document review/rating staff																
1.3 TQRIS Database																
1.3.1 Modify existing database as interim solution/ Develop requirements for new system																
1.3.2 Select vendor/develop and implement TQRIS database																
<b>Goal 2: Continue &amp; expand marketing to families</b>																
2.1 Continue and expand marketing																
2.2 Integrate Parent Aware into MNParentsKnow & other outreach programs																



- Letters of support: University of Minnesota, Center for Early Education and Development

### **Performance Measures**

See Table B2c.

### **Addressing Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs**

All types of ELD Programs are included in Minnesota's Parent Aware TQRIS.

### **Meeting Needs of Children with High Needs (Including Special Populations)**

Existing infrastructure will be used and new infrastructure developed to connect families receiving Child Care Assistance with highly rated programs.



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

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (*e.g.*, through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (*e.g.*, providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

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

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

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

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

Early education and development policy shifted considerably in Minnesota over the last decade in large part as a response to the local research conducted by economists Dr. Arthur Rolnick and Rob Grunewald at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis (2003). Their work demonstrated an extraordinary public return on investments in early childhood development, concluding that in order to yield the maximum return, investments must connect Children with High Needs to ELD Programs of high quality. They proposed scholarships (access money) tied to information about program quality (empowering information) as key strategies for accomplishing this.

This work catalyzed the development of a series of programs and pilot projects (including Parent Aware) that form the basis for our High-Quality Plan for promoting access to high-quality ELD Programs for Children with High Needs. The plan uses powerful incentives to drive surges in ELD Program quality over the grant period and connect a group of Minnesota's Children with High Needs from the Target Communities to those programs, resulting in benefits that will endure long after the grant period ends. Lessons learned from the Target Communities will be shared with communities around the state to prompt replication of successful approaches.

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT—B4a**

Key efforts to support and provide incentives for quality improvement in ELD Programs include Minnesota's Parent Aware TQRIS and the related aligned continuum of quality improvement supports described in B2a. This State Plan includes an aggressive increase in the market penetration of Parent Aware, a key strategy for improving quality and increasing the number of Children with High Needs in high-quality programs. Parent Aware includes a strong focus on quality improvement, providing participating ELD Programs serving higher numbers of Children with High Needs with quality coaches upon entry to Parent Aware, and providing quality improvement grants to programs with ratings lower than the top tier of 4 stars. Providers' perceptions of these supports are very positive. According to the Year 3 evaluation of Parent Aware (Tout, et al., 2010b), "When asked to describe how Parent Aware has been beneficial to their program, directors report that Parent Aware has provided them with training dollars, money for supplies and equipment, support from Parent Aware staff, and credibility in the eyes of parents" (p. 40). As described in B2b, Minnesota began building supports for continuous

improvement even before a pilot TQRIS was launched, and will continue to do so through this State Plan.

#### **ACCESS—B4b**

Minnesota has tested a number of incentive-based approaches that focus on removing barriers to accessing high-quality programs for families with Children with High Needs. Four bold and rigorously evaluated approaches form the basis of this Plan, including the Saint Paul Early Childhood Scholarship Program, the Pre-Kindergarten Allowances, School Readiness Connections, and Invest Early. The Scholarships and Allowances models provide portable subsidies to families; School Readiness Connections adjusts child care subsidy rules and funding to reward quality and promote continuity; and Invest Early blends public and private funding to provide a continuum of programs in rural Itasca County.

The Saint Paul Early Childhood Scholarship Program was a pilot test of the “scholarship” access approach proposed by Rolnick and Grunewald (2006). From 2008 to 2011, the program provided Children with High Needs with two years of full scholarship (up to \$13,000/year for full-time, center based programs) to attend high-quality (3- or 4-star Parent Aware rated) ELD Programs. The Children with High Needs participating in the Scholarship program showed significant increases in language and early math skills (Gaylor, Spiker, Williamson, & Ferguson, 2011). The program evaluation found that scholarship funds were used by programs to: support quality improvements, increase the hours children could attend, stabilize Children with High Needs, even when family circumstances changed, and to serve more Children with High Needs, including children with different needs than had been served by the Programs before, such as recent immigrants (Schwartz & Karoly, 2011). Families with Scholarships were able to choose between the full range of program types (centers, licensed family child care, Head Start and School Readiness programs). The most common reason families cited for choosing their ELD Program was quality.

The Pre-Kindergarten Allowance portable subsidy program, piloted in 2007-2009, was similar to the Scholarship program in eligibility requirements and the required use of the Allowance in a 3- or 4-star rated program. The Allowance amount was \$4,000 per year per child. While child outcomes were not studied as part of the Allowance program evaluation, the evaluation results showed that ELD Programs used the additional funds to pay for quality

improvements and children's care, including additional hours or additional spaces for children (Gaylor, Spiker, Ferguson, Williamson, & Georges, 2009).

From 2007 to 2011 the Department of Human Services piloted School Readiness Connections. The program had two goals: 1) create incentives for child care programs with high concentrations of CCAP children to provide services that support school readiness and 2) provide incentives for families receiving subsidies choose the participating programs. The first goal was accomplished by giving participating ELD Programs, which had to participate in Parent Aware and achieve a 3- or 4-star rating, enhanced reimbursement rates (25% higher) for serving children on CCAP. The incentive provided to participating families came in the form of more flexible CCAP policies (e.g., more lenient absent day policies, increased authorized hours to support continuity of care). The flexible policies offered as part of the program were well received by both families and ELD Programs (Snow & Spiker, 2009).

Invest Early is a community-based collaborative model that blends Head Start, School Readiness, and private funding from the Blandin Foundation to provide high-quality ELD services to Children with High Needs. Invest Early's outcomes have been strong since its inception in 2005, with the most stunning results revealed in the most recent evaluation (Chase & Valrose, 2011), showing that the Children with High Needs served through Invest Early *closed* the proficiency gap relative to higher income students on the kindergarten entry assessment, and exceeded the low-income comparison group by nearly 2 to 1 (Appendix 21). This model demonstrates the true potential of service coordination, which is a strategy particularly well suited to rural areas where fewer services are available and populations of Children with High Needs are more geographically dispersed.

## **HIGH-QUALITY PLAN**

### **GOALS AND ACTIVITIES**

Minnesota's Plan for continuously improving ELD Program quality and promoting access to high-quality ELD Programs for Children with High Needs is based on the innovative and successful approaches described above, and the evidence gathered in their evaluations. This High-Quality Plan focuses first on improving quality and then on removing barriers faced by families with Children with High Needs seeking to access high-quality ELD Programs.

**Goal 1: Improve the quality of Early Learning and Development programs across the state.**

The key activities for improving quality use the Parent Aware TQRIS as a framework, with the Program Standards used to structure quality improvement activities. ELD Programs are eager for support to improve their quality. The evaluations of Parent Aware (including targeted quality improvement efforts), Pre-Kindergarten Allowances, and the Saint Paul Early Childhood Scholarships, reveal that these initiatives are effective in motivating providers to adopt best practices. When offered the opportunity to obtain higher rates or supports to deliver quality services to children, participating ELD Programs of all types responded quickly by improving their quality to meeting the required Program Standards.

Our High-Quality Plan for providing a continuum of supports (e.g. Building Quality, coaching, etc.) to improve program quality is presented in B2, Goal 2.

**Goal 2: Connect Children with High Needs to 3- and 4-star Parent Aware rated ELD Programs.**

Based on strong evaluation results from each of the access approaches described above, and in acknowledgement that Minnesota's communities vary widely in terms of ELD Program supply and concentration of Children with High Needs (described in A1), this High-Quality Plan incorporates the most successful elements of each of the approaches. Activities 1 and 2 will take place in the four Target Communities.

**Activity 2.1:** Target communities and design School Readiness Scholarship approach.

Our four Target Communities will design an approach for administering School Readiness Scholarships in their area. Design parameters include:

- Eligibility is limited to children ages birth to kindergarten entry from families with income of less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Rate;
- Scholarships must be used in 3- or 4-star Parent Aware rated ELD Programs;
- Scholarship recipients must attend the ELD Program for a minimum of 15 hours per week, to insure intensity of instruction is adequate to address children's learning needs (Reynolds & Neuman, 2009);
- Families must be offered the opportunity to have their three-year-old child participate in Early Childhood Screening (see C2), although families always have the right to refuse screening.

The Target Communities will design their School Readiness Scholarship approach to meet the needs of families of Children with High Needs in their community. For example, on the

White Earth Reservation or in Itasca County, our rural Target Communities, the Scholarships may be leveraged by a community-level collaboration such as Invest Early. In this instance Scholarship funds would be blended with other public and private funds to increase the number of high-quality spaces available. In the more densely populated urban Target Communities, the Saint Paul Scholarship and Pre-Kindergarten Allowance approach is more likely to be implemented. In this instance the full range of high-quality private and public ELD Programs would respond to the availability of the Scholarships by making more high-quality spaces available and recruiting families with Children with High Needs. In all cases, programs receiving Scholarship funds may use them to address any identified needs (e.g., transportation, family support services, outreach to parents, full-year programming, meals, etc.).

***Activity 2.2:*** Implement School Readiness Scholarships.

School Readiness Scholarships will begin in September of Year 1 (2012) and be offered through August of Year 4 (2015).

**Goal 3: Engage school districts to provide high-quality ELD Programs.**

As described in Selection Criteria A1, Minnesota school districts have existing authority to use Title I funding to support ELD Programs; however, only four of 339 districts do so. In a recent Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association survey (Minnesota Department of Education, 2011), the majority of respondent principals said funding was the primary barrier to providing preschool services, and nearly all reported they would be interested in forming a leadership group to work on pre-kindergarten to grade three issues in their districts.

Strengthening public pre-kindergarten programs is a critical component of replicating an Invest Early type program in other areas of the state.

In addition to the Scholarships described in Goal 2, school districts receiving Title I funding in the Target Communities will have access to additional support and incentives to expand high-quality ELD opportunities. Activities include education, technical assistance, support to ensure participation in Parent Aware, and financial incentives in the form of matching funds. This Goal will particularly help implement strong pre-kindergarten programs in rural school districts, where schools are a primary connection point to families with Children with High Needs.

***Activity 3.1:*** Develop funding and evaluation toolkit.

During Year 1, the Office of Early Learning will convene a meeting with leaders (e.g., superintendents, principals, and ELD Program managers) from Target Community school districts to develop a plan for support and expansion of Title I use for pre-kindergarten services. Based on information collected at the convening and best practices for using Title I for early education, we will develop a “toolkit” for districts to use in creating a plan for funding and evaluating their pre-kindergarten service, and offer it, along with technical assistance, to districts that express an interest in the available matching funds. In addition, opportunities to learn about the benefits of early childhood education for school success will be provided to school boards and superintendents throughout the state to increase interest in this option.

**Activity 3.2:** Support “start-up” in districts.

In years two through four (2013-2015), any of the fifteen school districts serving children in the four Target Communities who dedicate Title I funding for early childhood education (or additional Title I funding, in cases where districts already operate ELD Programs using Title I) will be offered a 1:1 funding match. Technical assistance to help districts create high-quality ELD Programs will be provided by Department of Education staff, local Head Start programs, and experienced district personnel. School districts will be able to design the use of their funding in strategies aligned with this State Plan (e.g. districts may not use match dollars to supplant existing investments). Allowable uses include:

- Design a high-quality program that meets the required state School Readiness standards and Head Start Performance Standards, as well as Parent Aware Program Standards for school-based programs (Accelerated Pathway to Rating);
- Facilitate braiding of early childhood resources with Early Childhood Family Education, Early Childhood Special Education, Head Start and School Readiness;
- Explore potential partnerships with community child care programs and Head Start programs to increase full-day, year-round services, including transportation, meals, and family support services;
- Assess the developmental progress of children to ensure continuous improvement and to demonstrate the impact of using Title I funding to provide high-quality ELD Programs for Children with High Needs.

Each district must submit a plan to the Department of Education and will be approved based on the number of Children with High Needs under age five residing in the district, as well

as the demonstrated commitment and quality of their plan for operating and sustaining an ELD Program. Approved districts will receive 1:1 matching funds to support services, estimated at \$7,000 per child (50% district Title I dollars, 50% ELC matching grants), and grants will be awarded for a second year to districts reaching enrollment targets and continuing to dedicate an equal or higher amount Title I funds. After two years, district-sponsored ELD Programs should be established enough to demonstrate school readiness results and to access School Readiness Scholarship dollars.

**Goal 4: Recruit families of Children with High Needs.**

The experience of the Scholarship and Allowance pilot programs (Gaylor et. al. 2009, Gaylor et. al. 2011) demonstrated that access strategies like those described in Goals 2 and 3 will move significant numbers of Children with High Needs into high-quality ELD Programs. We also know that connecting Programs with the hardest to reach Children with High Needs is a challenge that requires concerted effort. The pilot program evaluations showed that trusted advocates, such as home visitors, are an effective way to recruit families that otherwise would never reach the door of a high-quality ELD Program.

**Activity 4.1:** Provide home visitors with information on helping families access ELD Programs.

Minnesota has a number of home visiting programs operating statewide, including Early Childhood Family Education home visiting provided by parent educators, evidence-based home visiting, public health nurse home visiting, and home visiting provided by Head Start and Early Head Start. Each of these programs will be useful in reaching Children with High Needs. We are fortunate that each Minnesota and the White Earth Band of Chippewa have Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grants to provide targeted evidence-based home visiting within their borders. Through these grants, evidence-based home visiting will be available in three of our four Target Communities (the Minneapolis and St. Paul Promise Neighborhoods and the White Earth Reservation). Part of the work carried out with this existing funding will focus on connecting families of Children with High Needs to high-quality ELD Programs, using School Readiness Scholarships and/or the availability of high-quality ELD Programs in local schools as an incentive. Home visitors will receive information on helping interested families to select a high-quality ELD Programs using Scholarships or other existing access supports, such as the Child Care Assistance Program. Home visitors will forge connections with community ELD



Programs to create two-way referral relationships, where ELD Programs will also refer eligible families for home visiting.

**Goal 5: Remove policy barriers to increasing quality and supporting access.**

As demonstrated in the School Readiness Connections pilot, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) policies can be a powerful lever for improving access to highly rated ELD Programs for Children with High Needs. Families served by CCAP are low-income and are either working, looking for work, or attending education or training. Many are currently or were recently attached to the TANF program. Policies could be changed to target a Parent Aware participation requirement to providers with high levels of CCAP engagement. Goals for potential policy changes include:

- Pay higher rates for highly rated providers in Parent Aware. Minnesota Statutes 119B.13 authorizes maximum payment rates that are 15% higher for centers that are accredited by certain organizations and for family child care providers that are either accredited by certain organizations or hold certain educational credentials. The purpose of the rate differential payment policy is to reimburse programs that have met quality standards at higher levels. The statute could be amended to align this payment policy to include programs with high Parent Aware ratings.
- Support children's healthy development and school readiness through encouraging participation in Parent Aware by providers who care for significant numbers of children receiving Child Care Assistance.
- Incent the majority of providers paid by CCAP into Parent Aware by requiring rating as a condition of payment (implemented after the first two points).

These policies would be implemented in combination with targeted Parent Aware outreach to providers serving children paid through CCAP.

**Activity 5.1:** Identify barriers and supports improving quality and access.

Annually, the Department of Human Services, partner agencies and other stakeholders will identify policies that support or inhibit improving the quality of ELD Programs and provide Children with High Needs with access to those quality programs.

**Activity 5.2:** Pursue policy changes as needed.

Some identified policy strategies may require statutory changes. The Department of Human Services will work with the Governor and look for legislative support to align CCAP

policies and Parent Aware in order to support children’s healthy development and school readiness. The Department of Human Services will also work with the Department of Education to assess other ways in which policy changes in the Child Care Assistance Program could be aligned with innovations in K-12 policy that have been demonstrated to result in improved educational outcomes for Children with High Needs.

**Goal 6: Evaluate impact of Plan in Target Communities.**

This State Plan is based in the belief that aligning significant resources to support infrastructure, quality improvement, and access in four Target Communities with various strengths and challenges will have real impact on children’s school readiness outcomes and will provide rich, actionable information that can be disseminated to other communities throughout Minnesota.

**Activity 6.1:** Develop evaluation plan in coordination with Target Communities.

Working with leaders from the White Earth Reservation, Itasca County, and the Minneapolis and Saint Paul Promise Neighborhoods, develop concise list of key evaluation questions to explore the impact of the State Plan on their communities, with a focus on child outcomes. Develop and issue Request for Proposals for an outside evaluator. Select outside evaluator.

**Activity 6.2:** Implement evaluation by collecting and analyzing data from each Target Community, based on the plan developed in Activity 6.1.

**Activity 6.3:** Develop report synthesizing results from all Target Communities (including recommendations for replication) and share with stakeholders statewide through the Minnesota Office of Early Learning website, biannual webcast, and presentations at community conferences and meetings.

**Realistic Timeline**

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>B4. Promoting Access to Quality ELD Programs for Children w/High Needs</b>																
<b>Goal 1: Improve Quality of ELD Programs (see B2)</b>																
<b>Goal 2: Connect Children with High Needs to Highly Rated</b>																

<b>ELD Programs</b>																
2.1 Target Communities design Scholarship model																
2.2 Implement School Readiness Scholarships																
<b>Goal 3: Engage School Districts to Provide High-Quality ELD Programs</b>																
3.1 Develop toolkit																
3.2 Start-up Support																
<b>Goal 4: Recruit Families</b>																
4.1 Provide home visitors with ELD information																
<b>Goal 5: Remove Policy Barriers</b>																
5.1 Identify barriers to access and quality																
5.2 Pursue changes in policy, as needed																
<b>Goal 6: Evaluate Impact on Target Communities</b>																
6.1 Develop evaluation plan																
6.2 Implement evaluation																
6.3 Reporting and dissemination																

**Responsible Parties**

Activities and responsible parties for Goal 1 are described in B2. For Goal 2, Activity 2.1 will be implemented in Target Communities under the guidance of the Director of Minnesota’s Office of Early Learning, in cooperation with key staff from the Departments of Human Services, Education, and Health. Activity 2.2, local-level administration of funds, will be handled through the appropriate local entity (CCR&R agency, county human service agency, or other, depending upon local capacity, which is concentrated differently in different areas of Minnesota). Any administering agency must have demonstrated capacity in contract administration.

All activities in Goal 3 will happen as a partnership between the Office of Early Learning and the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association, and will involve interested school districts from the Target Communities.

Activities in Goal 4 will be implemented by local home visiting programs funded by existing sources, working in partnership with high-quality ELD Programs in the Target Communities, including school districts accessing the Title I matching grants.

Activities in Goal 5 will be implemented under the direction of policy staff at the Department of Human Services, including the Assistant Commissioner with responsibility for CCAP, in consultation with the Director of the Office of Early Learning and other policy staff at the Departments of Human Services, Education, and Health.

Activities in Goal 6 will be implemented with key partners from the four Target Communities, in cooperation with the Minnesota Office of Early Learning Leadership Team and an external evaluator.

#### **Appropriate Financial Resources**

**\$10,160,000 Public Funds (Title I and MIECHV)**

**\$20,312,961 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$30,472,961 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

For more detail on this budget, please see A4 and related budget spreadsheets.

#### **Supporting Evidence**

- Appendix 21: Invest Early Evaluation
- Letters of intent: Invest Early, Northside Achievement Zone, Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood, and White Earth Reservation Tribal Council.
- Letters of support: Art Rolnick (University of Minnesota), Blandin Foundation – Invest Early, Metro Alliance for Healthy Families, Minnesota Coalition for Targeted Home Visiting, Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association, Northside Achievement Zone, Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood, White Earth Reservation Tribal Council.

#### **Performance Measures B4c**

<b>Performance Measure for (B)(4)(c)(1): Increasing the number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.</b>					
	<b>Baseline (Today)</b>	<b>Target- end of calendar year 2012</b>	<b>Target- end of calendar year 2013</b>	<b>Target- end of calendar year 2014</b>	<b>Target- end of calendar year 2015</b>

<b>Total number of programs covered by the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	1,405	3,996	7,780	10,538	14,112
<b>Number of programs in Tier 1</b>	4	45	150	300	450
<b>Number of programs in Tier 2</b>	24	75	250	500	750
<b>Number of programs in Tier 3</b>	64	105	350	700	1,050
<b>Number of programs in Tier 4</b>	301	472	732	1,101	1,450
<p><i>Include a row for each tier in the state's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, customize the labeling of the tiers, and indicate the highest and lowest tier.</i></p> <p><i>Baseline data are actual. These numbers were generated by the Parent Aware evaluation team, using data provided by the Parent Aware program that included all ratings issued as of June 30, 2011. The total number of Parent Aware rated programs as of June 30, 2011 is 393.</i></p> <p><i>The number of programs in tier 4 includes both full and accelerated 4-star ratings.</i></p>					

<b>Performance Measures for (B)(4)(c)(2): Increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.</b>											
<b>Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State</b>	<b>Number of Children with High Needs served by programs in the state</b>	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percent of Children with High Needs Participating in Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		<b>Baseline (Today)</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2012</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2013</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2014</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2015</b>	
		<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
State-funded preschool <i>Specify:</i>	23,317	2,857	12%	7,228	31%	8,860	38%	11,658	50%	13,990	60%
Early Head Start and Head Start <sup>16</sup>	14,096	3,397	24%	6,997	50%	8,797	62%	10,297	73%	10,897	77%
Early Learning and Development Programs funded by IDEA, Part C	5,013	33	.7%	36	.7%	41	.8%	49	1%	66	1.3%
Early	11,017	1,551	14%	2,827	26%	3,454	31%	4,214	38%	4,958	45%

<b>Performance Measures for (B)(4)(c)(2): Increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.</b>											
<b>Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State</b>	<b>Number of Children with High Needs served by programs in the state</b>	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percent of Children with High Needs Participating in Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		<b>Baseline (Today)</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2012</b>		<b>Target -end of calendar year 2013</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2014</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2015</b>	
		<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Learning and Development Programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619											
Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	1,473	960	65%	1,010	69%	1,070	73%	1,150	78%	1,225	83%
Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the state's CCDF program	21,175	4,224	20%	4,659	22%	5,294	25%	6,353	30%	8,470	40%
<i>Minnesota defines the top tiers as 3 and 4 stars.</i>											
<i>For state-funded preschool, the number of Children with High Needs served is actual based on numbers reported to the Department of Education by programs receiving state preschool funds as reported in the Annual Program Data Report. The baseline numbers are actual based on the numbers of children reported by the state-funded preschool programs participating in Parent Aware.</i>											
<i>For Early Head Start and Head Start, the number of Children with High Needs served is actual based on numbers reported to the Department of Education by programs receiving Head Start funds. The baseline numbers are actual based on the numbers of children reported by the Head Start programs participating in Parent Aware.</i>											
<i>For programs funded by IDEA Parts B and C, the number of Children with High Needs is actual based on numbers reported to the Department of Education by programs receiving IDEA funds as reported in the</i>											

<b>Performance Measures for (B)(4)(c)(2): Increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.</b>											
<b>Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State</b>	<b>Number of Children with High Needs served by programs in the state</b>	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percent of Children with High Needs Participating in Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		<b>Baseline (Today)</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2012</b>		<b>Target -end of calendar year 2013</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2014</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2015</b>	
		<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<p><i>Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS). The baseline numbers are estimates. Of the 5,013 children funded by IDEA, Part C, just 164 were served in non-home-based settings. Of the 11,017 children funded by IDEA, Part B, 75% were served in Head Start, School Readiness or child care settings. The baseline estimates used these totals, and assumed 20% participation in a rated setting for children funded by IDEA, Part C and 18% participation in rated settings for children funded by IDEA, Part B.</i></p> <p><i>For programs funded under Title I of ESEA, the number of Children with High Needs is actual based on numbers reported to the Department of Education by programs receiving Title I funds as reported in the federal Consolidated State Performance Plan.</i></p> <p><i>The total number of Children with High Needs served by programs in the state receiving CCDF funds is actual, based on the monthly average number of children served. The baseline number of children in Programs receiving CCDF funds is the number of children receiving payments from the Child Care Assistance Program as estimated by the Parent Aware evaluation team and reported in the 2010 Parent Aware evaluation report.</i></p>											

### **Addressing Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs**

ELD Programs of all types are eligible for Parent Aware. Incentives for quality improvement (described in detail in B2) are available to all program types in varying degrees. All types of programs, including public and private, may serve families with Scholarships if they enter Parent Aware and families choose them. School-based ELD Programs may access the Title I matching funds, and may partner with other high-quality community ELD Programs if they so choose. By including the multiple, significant incentives described above, Minnesota will also create an attractive pathway for legally non-licensed programs to implement structured quality improvement (see Priority 2).

### **Meeting Needs of Children with High Needs (Including Special Populations)**

The approaches described here create clear incentives for ELD Programs to serve Children with High Needs. The stipulation that children receiving School Readiness Scholarships

receive health and developmental screening will help families identify the individual needs of their children. The additional money that will flow to ELD Programs, as Scholarships, will provide additional to better meet the needs of those children.



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

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

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

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

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

Parent Aware's hallmarks include rigorous evaluation, forthright reporting of results, and using results to continuously improve the rating system. Private funding has been committed to continue these efforts. The core evaluation question—what is the correlation between ratings and child progress toward school readiness?—will remain the same, with additional focus on examining the revised Program Standards and indicators. Minnesota will also continuously examine the patterns of quality improvement, particularly as they relate to the statewide rollout of Building Quality (B2) and the more intensive quality supports offered in the Target Communities, including Child Care Health Consultants (B2).

Since the inception of the pilot, the Parent Aware program developers and evaluators jointly defined TQRIS validation as a multi-dimensional *process* that produces recommendations and options for refinement at each stage of implementation. Examples of this process are evident in the evaluation work done to date. Key elements of the evaluation and results are highlighted below and in the Appendices 23, 24 and 25.

**Parent Aware Evaluation**

Validation early in the Parent Aware pilot was aimed at understanding the extent to which key stakeholders and the public perceived that Parent Aware had the potential to achieve its goals of improving quality, providing information to parents, and improving outcomes for young children (Tout, Starr, & Cleveland, 2008). At this stage, stakeholders were optimistic about Parent Aware. However, they expressed concerns about the challenges of engaging parents and providers, providing adequate supports for quality improvement, and recruiting and rating culturally and linguistically diverse providers. Evaluation conducted in the first year of the pilot made it clear that providing an accelerated rating process for accredited programs (as well as Head Start/Early Head Start and School Readiness programs) facilitated participation in Parent Aware.

Scoring patterns were explored in-depth in the Year 3 Parent Aware evaluation report (Tout, et al., 2010b). The purpose of the validation analyses conducted at this later stage of the pilot (after three years of implementation) was to test how scores in each of the quality domains related to the observational measures, which included the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2005); the Classroom Assessment and

Scoring System™ (CLASS™; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008); and, the literacy, mathematics, and diversity subscales of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Extended (ECERS-E; Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2006). Observation measures were examined for all programs that had received a full rating, as well as for a sample of programs that received an accelerated rating.

### **CHILD PROGRESS TOWARD SCHOOL READINESS—B5b**

Measures of children's progress were also examined in the Year 3 evaluation report. To collect the sample of child assessments, 4-year-old children were recruited from rated programs and assessed in the fall and spring on a variety of assessment tools, selected to align with the domains of school readiness assessed in Minnesota's Kindergarten Entrance Assessment (see Tout, et al., 2010b; also see E1). While rating levels could not be linked to children's functioning in Year 3 due to the limited number of programs involved in the pilot, the evaluation did examine children's progress overall. Children made significant gains from the fall to the spring on measures of expressive and receptive vocabulary, print knowledge, phonological awareness, reduced anxiety/withdrawal, and persistence. No gains were observed on the measures of early math skills and reduced anger/aggression. Effect sizes for the measures of early literacy and expressive and receptive vocabulary were in the medium range for Children with High Needs.

### **DIFFERENTIATING LEVELS OF QUALITY—B5a**

Analyses were also conducted to determine how programs at the various rating levels scored on the observational measures in Parent Aware to understand how well the rating system was differentiating quality levels. Results indicated that fully-rated, 4-star programs tended to outscore programs at other levels on several of the observational measures, though they were not always different from 3-star programs or 4-star automatically rated programs (see Table 1). This provides some evidence for the effectiveness of distinguishing a 4-star program in Parent Aware, but it demonstrates that further refinement is needed to differentiate the other levels in the TQRIS. The next evaluation report, to be released in November 2011, will examine these patterns in greater depth, with a larger number of programs.

**Table 1. Results examining how observational measures differentiate Parent Aware star levels.**

<b>Observational Measure</b>	<b>1-star</b>	<b>2-star</b>	<b>3-star</b>	<b>4-star</b>	<b>4-star automatic</b>	<b>Statistically significant results for 4-star programs</b>
<b>ECRS-R</b>	Not available	3.33	4.16	4.54	3.73	4-star fully rated greater than 4-star auto and 2-star
<b>ITRS-R</b>	Not available	2.69	3.40	3.86	3.18	4-star fully rated and 3-star greater than 2-star
<b>FCCERS-R</b>	2.82	3.1	3.17	3.9	Not available	4-star fully rated greater than all other levels
<b>ECERS—Extended literacy</b>	Not available	3.19	3.99	4.47	3.98	4-star fully rated and 4-star auto greater than 2-star
<b>CLASS™—emotional support</b>	Not available	5.18	5.8	5.96	5.52	4-star fully rated and 3-star greater than 2-star
<b>CLASS™—classroom organization</b>	Not available	4.68	5.28	5.51	5.0	4-star fully rated greater than 2-star

Source: Year 3 Evaluation Report (Tout, et al., 2010b)

## **HIGH-QUALITY PLAN**

This validation Plan builds on evaluation results and lessons learned to date about the validation process. It also adds new elements to ensure that the evaluation is aligned with other state activities to develop a Comprehensive Assessment System and effective data practices.

### **Goal 1. Analyze the effectiveness of the indicators in the updated Parent Aware Program Standards.**

*Activity 1.1:* Work collaboratively with the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services to determine standards of evidence and decision rules for documentation. Develop an evaluation plan to that outlines the data needed and a strategy for completing the analyses.

*Activity 1.2:* Obtain indicator and rating level data after 150 programs have received full ratings and again after 500 programs. Coordinate the collection of data from programs in the Accelerated Pathway to Rating process. Prepare data for analysis. Examine how the new

indicators are functioning and where there are significant differences among or within ELD Program types.

**Activity 1.3:** Describe patterns observed and make recommendations for the indicators in reports produced early in 2013 and 2015.

**Goal 2. Determine the effectiveness of the hybrid rating structure.**

**Activity 2.1:** Work collaboratively with the Departments of Education and Human Services to develop an evaluation plan that outlines how the analysis of the rating structure will be conducted and includes a timeline for reporting.

**Activity 2.2:** Obtain indicator data (points achieved on each indicator and scores on the CLASS™) and rating level data after 500 programs have been fully rated using the hybrid structure.

Coordinate the collection of Environment Rating Scale data from fully rated programs and comparable observation and indicator data from a random sample of programs in the Accelerated Pathway to Rating. Prepare data for analysis. Examine whether and how the hybrid structure is functioning as an effective process for differentiating quality by conducting analyses to understand: 1) scoring variations and the proportion of programs achieving each rating level; 2) scores on the Environment Rating Scales and CLASS™ and differential associations with each of the levels in the hybrid structure; and 3) variations in rating patterns by ELD Program or other characteristics.

**Activity 2.3:** Reporting and recommendations for continuous improvement.

Report patterns observed and make recommendations for modifying or strengthening the hybrid structure in a report produced at the end of 2014. Examine the extent to which there are discernable differences between levels.

**Goal 3. Examine the linkages between ratings and children's progress toward school readiness.**

**Activity 3.1:** Work collaboratively with the Departments to develop an effective plan for recruitment of children that is stratified by program type and county.

**Activity 3.2:** Begin data collection, focusing on children after the first full year of expansion, using a battery of direct and teacher-reported measures. Work with the Comprehensive Assessment Team to develop a process for phasing in the new assessment process in the final year of the grant. Collect data from teachers, directors, family child care providers, and families.

Conduct two rounds of data collection: one in fall 2013 and spring 2014, and one in fall 2014 and spring 2015.

**Activity 3.3:** Report findings in two phases that mirror the data collection schedule.

**Goal 4. Examine patterns of quality improvement in Parent Aware.**

**Activity 4.1:** Work with the Departments of Education and Human Services to develop a plan for examining the patterns and predictors of quality improvement. Focus evaluation on the degree to which the rating scale can detect changes in program quality. Examine what services and supports are most effective in promoting quality.

**Activity 4.2:** Establish the data elements that will be collected and analyzed in order to gather information about the type (e.g., financial or consultation), frequency, dosage, and content of quality improvement supports. Survey administrators, teachers/providers, and quality coaches annually. Analyze patterns of supports, perceptions of how effective supports are, and scoring in the QRIS.

**Activity 4.3:** Summarize the patterns of quality improvement and the services and supports provided in reports in 2013, 2014, and 2015. Make recommendations for modifications and implement them as possible.

**Realistic Timeline**

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>B5. Validating TQRIS Effectiveness</b>																
<b>Goal 1: Analyze effectiveness of revised indicators</b>																
1.1: Collaborative planning	■	■							■	■						
1.2: Data collection & analysis			■	■							■	■				
1.3 Reporting & recommendations					■								■			
<b>Goal 2: Determine effectiveness of hybrid structure</b>																
2.1 Collaborative planning					■	■										
2.2 Data collection & analysis							■	■	■	■	■					
2.3 Reporting & recommendations												■				
<b>Goal 3: Examine linkages between</b>																

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
<b>B5. Validating TQRIS Effectiveness ratings &amp; child progress</b>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.1 Collaborative planning																
3.2 Data collection & analysis																
3.3 Reporting & recommendations																
<b>Goal 4: Examine patters of quality improvement</b>																
4.1 Collaborative planning																
4.2 Data collection & analysis																
4.3 Reporting & recommendations																

### Responsible Parties

All funding for the evaluation to validate the effectiveness of Parent Aware is provided through private funders (Parent Aware for School Readiness and Greater Twin Cities United Way). They have indicated that Child Trends will be responsible for conducting each of the activities outlined in this section, in coordination with key staff from the Departments of Human Services, Education, and Health. Dr. Kathryn Tout, the Evaluation Director at Child Trends, will be the key evaluation partner. See Appendix 22 for a description of Child Trends' capacity to conduct the evaluation and for a description of management processes. To foster the development of strong community relationships and to gather input on plans, strategies for recruitment, and input on findings and recommendations, Child Trends will convene a Parent Aware Evaluation Advisory Committee that will meet semi-annually.

### Appropriate Financial Resources

Note the financial resources listed here support all Parent Aware TQRIS activities, including B1, B2, B3, and B5:

**\$9,760,457 Public Funds (CCDF)**

**\$7,600,000 Private Funds**

**\$7,978,232 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$25,338,689 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

For more detail on this budget, please see A4 and related budget spreadsheets.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Appendix 22: Description of Child Trends' capacity
- Appendices 23 – 25: Parent Aware Evaluation Report summaries (Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3)
- Letters of support: Child Trends, Parent Aware for School Readiness

**Performance Measures:** Not applicable.

**Addressing Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs**

The evaluation will include all of the ELD Programs eligible to participate in Parent Aware. Programs that enter Parent Aware in the Accelerated Pathway to Rating process will be required to participate in observational assessments and documentation reviews so that the effectiveness of the accelerated rating pathway can be evaluated. The evaluation will also develop protocols to examine the effectiveness of efforts to recruit more programs with children with an IEP or IFSP to participate in highly rated programs and increase capacity of highly rated programs to serve children with disabilities. The experiences of programs and participants will be explored so that recommendations can be made for improving these strategies.

**Meeting Needs of Children with High Needs (Including Special Populations)**

The evaluation conducted during the Parent Aware pilot prioritized recruitment of Children with High Needs. These recruitment strategies will be further strengthened during the next phase of Parent Aware by working closely with members of the Parent Aware Advisory Committee. Analyses will be completed to examine participation of Children with High Needs in Parent Aware rated programs and to understand the supports that facilitate participation in these programs. Analyses will also focus on the gains Children with High Needs make from the fall to the spring in the year before kindergarten. The evaluation will also determine a process for gathering information about Children with High Needs who are infants and toddlers.



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

*The State must address in its application--*

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);*
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and*
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).*

*The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.*

**C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children**

*Note: The total available points for (C)(1) through (C)(4) = 60. The 60 available points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria in the Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points.*

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

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

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

(a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;

(c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and

(d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

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

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

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

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

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

The quality of a system is dependent on the expectations that form its core and on shared accountability for meeting those expectations. Minnesota's State Plan is built on long-established, research-based Early Learning and Development Standards. These standards make clear the expectations for young children's learning and provide a framework for measuring progress toward improved outcomes for Children with High Needs. Minnesota's Early Learning and Development Standards are based in research, have been reviewed by experts in the field, and are in use statewide. They form the basis of our Program Standards, Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and Comprehensive Assessment System. Our High-Quality Plan formalizes a process for continuous improvement of the standards and puts in place a new strategy to improve usage of the standards by Early Childhood Educators serving Children with High Needs. Implementation of this plan will result in standards that become stronger over time and encourage more intentional and effective use of our Early Learning and Development Standards in ELD Program classrooms.

**EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS—C1a**

Minnesota has implemented a two-part set of Early Learning and Development Standards. The Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress Minnesota's Early Learning Guidelines for Birth to 3 (Appendix 26) and Minnesota's Early Learning Standards for 3 to 5 (Appendix 27), commonly referred to as the ECIPs, are Minnesota's framework for understanding and communicating a common set of developmentally appropriate expectations for young children.

The development process for the ECIPs was rigorous and inclusive. The ECIPs are based on well-accepted guidelines for child outcome standards (NAEYC & NAECS/SDE, 2002; Shore, Bodrova, & Leong, 2004). As part of the process, Minnesota developed a set of evidence-based (Scott-Little, Kagan, & Frelow, 2003; Neuman & Roskos, 2004) criteria against which to judge the inclusion of specific indicators. The criteria required that indicators be reasonably achievable and age-appropriate; comprehensive, covering all domains of development; broadly applicable to children from diverse linguistic, economic, and cultural backgrounds; and broadly applicable to children with variations in developmental needs and abilities in different early childhood settings. The resulting Minnesota ECIPs include all Essential Domains of School Readiness:

Social and Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Language and Literacy, Creativity and the Arts, Cognitive Development (including mathematical and scientific thinking), and Physical and Motor Development (Minnesota Department of Education & Minnesota Department of Human Services, 2005; Minnesota Department of Human Services & Minnesota Department of Health, 2007). Community review and expert evaluation also contributed to the development process. The task force that worked on each version represented a broad range of perspectives, including child care, early childhood special education, higher education, parents, and community groups. It also included input from Minnesota's Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services. In addition, the process involved a public review period. Minnesota's ECIPs received strong reviews from experts, including review of the birth to three version by child development experts at WestEd, and review of the three to five version by Catherine Scott-Little and the Center for Improvement in Early Reading and Achievement. Based on the reviews and evidence, Minnesota concluded that its standards were developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate.

#### **ALIGNMENT WITH MINNESOTA ACADEMIC STANDARDS—C1b**

Minnesota completed its initial alignment of the ECIPs with Minnesota's K-12 Academic Standards in 2005 (Minnesota Department of Education). The alignment is included in training on the content and use of the ECIPs in order to show the continuum of learning during the early years and facilitate the transition to kindergarten. Because our K-12 standards are regularly updated, we continuously realign the ECIPs with those standards. Earlier this year, Minnesota conducted an initial review of the ECIPs alignment with the K-12 standards as they stand today. The review uncovered gaps that will be addressed as part of our High-Quality Plan to ensure continuous improvement of the ECIPs. Minnesota is also nearing completion of the Minnesota Children's Indicators of Progress for children age five through twelve. These standards are aligned with and support the K-12 academic standards, but they are broader, encompassing all developmental domains for the school-age group.

#### **USE OF EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS—C1c**

Minnesota's Early Learning and Development Standards form the backbone of early childhood and development programming at all levels of the system and across program types.

- The ECIPs are the foundation for Parent Aware Program Standards. Parent Aware Program Standards require that instruction and assessment be aligned with the ECIPs,

creating a scaffold on which the ratings are built. For example, programs must ensure staff are familiar with the ECIPs before earning 1 star, whereas reaching 3 or 4 stars requires not only familiarity but also the alignment of curriculum and assessment with the ECIPs.

- As part of our High-Quality Plan for the implementation of a Comprehensive Assessment System a contractor will conduct detailed analysis of relation between the ECIPs and environment rating assessments currently used in our state to identify ways in which assessment information relates to, or indicates, aspects of the Standards.
- The ECIPs form the foundation of our Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework: Minnesota's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners, which currently supports a large portion of professional development activities in the state. As part of our State Plan for a Great Workforce (D1-D2), more Early Childhood Educators will participate in training that includes the ECIPs at its foundation.
- Minnesota's state pre-kindergarten program, the School Readiness Program, is, by statute, required to "provide comprehensive program content and intentional instructional practice aligned with the state early childhood learning guidelines and kindergarten standards" (Minnesota Statutes 124D.15 subdivision 3(2)).
- The ECIPs are aligned with the three identified child outcomes for Part C and Part B, Section 619 of IDEA, in an effort to support greater awareness and use of the ECIPs in early childhood special education.
- As part of licensing requirements, child care programs must address each of the early childhood domains of learning contained in the ECIPs and have a written program plan detailing their use (Minnesota Rule 9503.0045 Subpart 1). Minnesota also intentionally aligned the ECIPs with Head Start Child Outcomes to ensure that a unified set of early learning standards were informing planning and instruction in all ELD Programs.

#### **PROMOTING EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS—C1d**

Training sessions on the ECIPs and copies of the standards are made available to parents, caregivers, Early Childhood Educators, and any other interested Minnesotan through local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies. Minnesota's Early Learning Council dedicated American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to create a train-the-trainer curriculum on high-quality coaching practices and to embed the ECIPs in all coaching and mentoring initiatives statewide.

By the end of 2013 there will be 24 trainers and 48 coaches implementing the ECIPs in diverse coaching and mentoring projects. In a second effort, a contract will soon be awarded for the development of a communication plan to promote the ECIPs and a parent guide to the ECIPs statewide (Minnesota Early Childhood Advisory Council, 2010). This kind of familiarity with learning and development expectations will help parents prepare their children for kindergarten, identify when intervention may be needed, and select the most appropriate ELD Program. The ECIPs are promoted in a variety of additional ways and to all program types because of their incorporation throughout our system (i.e., foundational to Program Standards and professional development activities).

## **GOALS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Goal 1: Improve usage of the ECIPs by Early Childhood Educators in all ELD Programs.**

Teachers and providers are faced with the challenge of orchestrating learning standards, observations, curricula, assessments, and knowledge of individual children into their planning of day-to-day experiences for children. Expanded use of the ECIPs with relation to each of these areas would advance the skills of Early Childhood Educators in providing differentiated instruction and content that is intentionally aligned with the ECIPs.

*Activity 1.1:* Develop ECIPs-related professional development training that helps Early Childhood Educators in all ELD Program types better incorporate the standards in children's day-to-day activities.

*Activity 1.2:* Develop materials, including video segments and developmental sequence charts, that tie instructional strategies to advancing skill and knowledge acquisition. Training will be aligned with our Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

*Activity 1.3:* Implement and integrate professional development materials throughout the state with cross-sector training partners to reach all ELD Program staff.

*Activity 1.4:* Design and implement evaluation of the professional development approach, delivery, and impact on child outcomes.

### **Goal 2: Establish a review cycle to continually improve the ECIPs.**

Regular review of the ECIPs to reflect updated research and changing K-12 academic standards will help Early Childhood Educators build and deliver programs and interventions that most effectively prepare Children with High Needs for kindergarten.

*Activity 2.1:* Establish a review cycle for both sets of the ECIPs.

**Activity 2.2:** Design a consistent review process that will ensure a focus on Children with High Needs and the involvement of early childhood learning and development experts, including dual language learner experts, Early Childhood Educators, diverse cultural and community groups, parents, and cross-agency representatives. Ensure statewide involvement and consider the review cycle for the K-12 Academic Standards.

**Activity 2.3:** Implement review process.

### Reasonable Timeline

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
<b>B1. Statewide TQRIS</b>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Goal 1: Improve ECIPs usage</b>																
1.1-1.2: Develop training and materials																
1.3: Implement training																
1.3: Design and implement evaluation																
<b>Goal 2: Establish review cycle for ECIPs</b>																
2. 1: Establish review cycle																
2.2: Define review process																
2.3: Implement review process																

### Responsible Parties

The Department of Education will work with the Departments of Health and Human Services to develop training and materials in Goal 1 to ensure that they are aligned with Minnesota's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. The Department of Education will implement and evaluate the training. Potential partners include: Minnesota Children's Museum, Twin Cities Public Television (TPT), the Center for Early Education and Development

at the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Center for Professional Development and other state agencies.

The Department of Education will lead the review process in Goal 2 and will engage the Departments of Health and Human Services in the process.

### **Appropriate Financial Resources**

**\$279,530 Public Funds (ARRA)**

**\$220,800 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$500,330 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

For more detail on this budget, please see A4 and related budget spreadsheets.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Appendix 26: The Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress Minnesota's Early Learning Guidelines for Birth to 3
- Appendix 27: The Minnesota's Early Learning Standards for 3 to 5

### **Addressing Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs**

To accomplish Goal 1, the Department of Education will partner with the appropriate professional development providers to ensure that training reaches Early Childhood Educators across program types. The review process in Goal 2 will engage all ELD Program types.

### **Meeting Needs of Children with High Needs (Including Special Populations)**

Goal 1 will improve the ability of Early Childhood Educators to use the ECIPs in intentional ways throughout the instructional day and will help to ensure that Children with High Needs are progressing with developmental milestones as set forth by the ECIPs. Ongoing improvement of the ECIPs in Goal 2 will ensure that program and family expectations for child development reflect the most up-to-date understanding of healthy development.



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

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

(a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;

(b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;

(c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and

(d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

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

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

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

Data collection, analysis, and utilization are essential elements of an overall system that links together, coordinates, and supports the continuous improvement of other parts of Minnesota's Plan (see A2). As described in this section, our Plan for Minnesota's Comprehensive Assessment System will build on existing infrastructure and strengths to:

- Review and refine assessment and its linkages at every level—from child to classroom, classroom to program, and program to state—and across all ages and types of programs to ensure that we have the best possible assessment instruments and approaches for all subgroups of Children with High Needs (Goals 1 and 2);
- Provide ongoing professional development and program-level support for understanding the purposes and best uses of these assessment instruments and approaches, and provide ongoing training to administer assessments and use the results of these activities to improve outcomes for individuals, classrooms, programs, and the system (Goal 3); and
- Align and continuously review linkages across assessment instances and instruments, and produce a more coherent, coordinated, and efficient system for professionals serving Children with High Needs (Goals 1 and 4).

Program providers who collect data, refer to it, and use it to change their behavior and their program's practices have learners with better outcomes than those who do not collect and refer to data in a regular and meaningful way (Fuchs, Deno, & Mirkin, 1984; McConnell, Priest, Davis, & McEvoy, 2002). This is specifically true for caregivers and educators of Children with High Needs (e.g., Landry, Anthony, Swank, & Monseque-Bailey, 2009). Minnesota has the building blocks of an infrastructure to support high-quality and rigorous data collection and use of assessment data for ongoing program improvement. As in other parts of our Plan, our work described here will build upon, expand, and improve this existing infrastructure.

While Minnesota's current system has a variety of options to assess and improve programs and to help parents and programs build the best possible ELD experience for individual children, we need to improve our ability to tailor this system to best meet the needs of individual children and to improve system components based on experiences and observed outcomes. Our Plan includes a Comprehensive Assessment System that describes performance and growth from the individual child to the classroom, program, and state; and that serves as our ELD "global

positioning system,” providing information about which route to take and telling us to change course when we are not headed in the right direction.

Minnesota’s existing assessments are various, which is both a strength and a weakness. ELD Programs make use of a range of child and environment assessments, but these points of data are not linked well enough to chart a course and maintain direction. Our High-Quality Plan for implementing a developmentally appropriate, Comprehensive Assessment System will address this by:

1. Establishing an Assessment and Data System Task Force to review and recommend improvements to Minnesota’s Comprehensive Assessment System;
2. Improving the delivery of developmental screening, by implementing online and audio versions of ASQ and ASQ-SE for use by service providers to and parents of Children with High Needs;
3. Improving the ability of ELD Programs and Early Childhood Educators to choose, use, and interpret assessment data;
4. Increasing capacity to connect and coordinate intervention across data sources to increase synchronization and efficiency of ELD services; and
5. Developing and producing a School Readiness Report Card that describes both program operation and child outcomes in a connected, coordinated, and actionable way.

### **Context for Support of these Actions**

Minnesota, like other states, has taken a fairly broad approach to approving the selection of assessment practices and instruments in all early childhood assessment arenas, with no single instrument required, nor any single instrument used in any one aspect of early childhood development. Rather, in Parent Aware, Early Childhood Screening, Early Learning and Development Standards, and assessment of school readiness, the Departments of Education and Human Services have specified broad parameters for reviewing and approving assessment practices and instruments, and in practice the Departments have developed lists of instruments that can be used with approval. Currently, public and private ELD Programs in Minnesota use a small but varied set of child and program assessments for both periodic assessment—including Age Three Screening and kindergarten entry—and ongoing progress monitoring. While useful for implementation and maintenance of local authority and control, this approach also produces a patchwork of disparate, hard-to-connect assessments of varied psychometric quality, and it

makes coordinated approaches to collection, use, and reporting of results cumbersome and of limited utility.

While this variation in assessment practices and instruments has served initial system development well, continued use of multiple instruments also presents a challenge to development and refinement of a comprehensive system of care and education for our youngest citizens. Thus, through both the ongoing work of the Minnesota Office of Early Learning and the Plan proposed here, we will move strategically to expand and improve our parameters for assessment practices and instrument review, while encouraging all early childhood programs to move toward use of a smaller set of child and program assessment practices.

### **Relation to Other Parts of Early Learning Challenge Grant Plan**

The Comprehensive Assessment System components described here will interact with our vision for Kindergarten Entry Assessment (E1) and Data System (E2), as well as our efforts to promote quality and increase access to effective programs for Children with High Needs. The assessment practices described here will be indexed conceptually and evaluated empirically to our Kindergarten Entry Assessment. This level of linkage is critical to building a coordinated and effective system; put simply, we must measure and act on smaller units of data (e.g., child status and progress measures, age three early childhood screening assessments) that predict and relate to larger and later units of assessment (e.g., Kindergarten Entry Assessment). This ensures that data used to improve individual child and program-level services are related to our desired long-term goal of improved school readiness.

Similarly, assessment practices described here must contribute to and benefit from our state's overall Data System. Without question, some data are of primary interest to one professional for one particular moment in time. But, there are many instances where data linkage and sharing increases the efficiency and effectiveness of program services within and across programs and time. Data collected in classrooms about individual children can and should be retained and aggregated, and, when appropriate, used in concert with other data to describe and coordinate child services and improve system operation.

Finally, assessment practices and data utilization described here will produce the greatest benefit when they relate and contribute directly to ongoing efforts to assess and improve program quality and, in turn, improve outcomes. We envision a system where select program inputs (most notably, Parent Aware) relate to and predict program outcomes (child assessments), and where

both inputs and outcomes are used in concert to expand and improve both aspects of assessment. This level of connection and coordination will only come with deliberate effort, as described in this Plan.

Taken as a whole, the activities described here and in E1, E2, B1, and B3 will create a system of evidence-based decision making that will inform classroom and home-based practice, program service delivery, parent choice, and policies at the local and state levels. This Assessment and Data System will inform decisions and impact factors both proximal (caregiver behavior) and distal (public policies) that influence and improve children's development.

The components of our proposed Assessment and Data System are:

**1. Universal individual child assessment (C2, E1)**

- a. Information will be collected about individual children's overall development at three universal time points: screening, kindergarten entry, and kindergarten exit.
- b. Benchmarks will be set at these time points such that data can be linked to children's developmental trajectories and inform programmatic and instructional decisions.

**2. Targeted child assessment (C2)**

- a. Providers will collect assessment data about children in Parent Aware rated programs, Early Childhood Special Education, Head Start, and school-based pre-kindergarten programs and will report child progress data annually to the Minnesota Office of Early Learning.
- b. Providers in Parent Aware rated programs, and other Early Childhood Special Education, Head Start, and school-based pre-kindergarten programs will also conduct ongoing, formative assessments, to inform instruction, improve their environments, and report to parents.

**3. Program quality assessment (B1 and B3)**

- a. An environment assessment self study will be created to assist ELD Programs in "getting ready" for Parent Aware rating.
- b. All ELD Programs in Parent Aware will conduct assessments on the quality of adult-child interactions.
- c. Parent Aware ratings will include examination of each ELD Program's assessment practices and related teacher training.

**4. Substantially improved pre-service and in-service training on assessment selection, use, administration, and reporting—especially for ELD providers of Children with High Needs (C2, D2)**

- a. Substantially expanded pre-service and in-service training opportunities will be offered on how to choose, use and interpret assessment tools.
- b. Coaching, mentoring, and other real time technical assistance will be provided to ensure that Early Childhood Educators can appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

**5. System level assessment (C2)**

- a. A “School Readiness Report Card” comprised of 15 indicators of school readiness and 14 additional context measures from existing data sources will be created for tracking progress towards meeting the goal of all children ready for kindergarten.
- b. Data will be publically reported with analysis from outside of the Office of Early Learning.

**6. Data structures: Student information software system and data warehouse (E2)**

- a. Use of a student information software system (such as ChildPlus.net) will be expanded, and the system will be timely, relevant, and accessible for ELD providers to make classroom- and program-level decisions, with links to a Data Warehouse for policy-level decisions.
- b. The data warehouse and analytic tools will allow meaningful linkages among child level assessment data, program data, and provider data.

**GOALS AND ACTIVITIES**

**Goal 1: Establish an Assessment and Data System Task Force to review and recommend improvements to Minnesota’s Comprehensive Assessment System**

*Activity 1.1:* Appoint members and charge Assessment and Data System Task Force to make evidence-based recommendations for design, implementation, and ongoing refinement of a comprehensive system of child, program, and state-level assessment of developmental achievement that reflects state and professional practice standards for school readiness and its development, and for high-quality assessment of all associated components.

This Task Force will articulate an approach for better aligning and integrating

assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple ELD Programs.

- Task Force develops a broad architecture for child, program, and state-level assessment that relates directly to desired outcomes as represented in the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress.
- Task Force describes general principles for each level of assessment, reflecting standards and recommendations of the National Research Council (2008), assessment and measurement guidelines in early childhood education (Greenwood & McConnell, in press), and standards of national professional and scientific organizations (AERA, 1999).
- Task Force reviews assessment practices currently employed, as well as emerging or new approaches that show particular merit or promise.
- Task Force recommends a coordinated, aligned system of instruments, applications, and approaches going forward, and procedures or principles for reviewing and refining these recommendations over time.
- Minnesota Office of Early Learning and the Early Learning Council appoint Task Force Members. A Task Force of 12-14 individuals will include members of the Early Learning Council; staff from the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services; representatives of the academic community with expertise in this area; parents; and program managers.

***Activity 1.2:*** Establish and produce deliverables.

This Task Force will:

- Propose top-level design of a coordinated assessment system, with broad parameters for selection of all measures and specific parameters for specification of measures at age three and kindergarten entry, with progress measures leading up to each of these time points;
- Produce substantive analysis of existing Minnesota practices and other evidence-based options for assessment at each time point;
- Recommend measures and practices (including professional development to support implementation and ongoing use of this system); and
- Recommend ongoing evaluation, analysis, and refinement of the coordinated assessment

system.

**Goal 2: Improve delivery of developmental screening, by implementing online versions of ASQ and ASQ-SE for use by parents of and providers of service to Children with High Needs.**

Minnesota has a solid, existing set of health and developmental screening programs: Head Start; Early Childhood Screening; Child and Teen Checkups/Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT); and screenings provided by independent health care providers. These programs are coordinated and standardized by an Interagency Developmental Screening Task Force, which includes the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services. The most substantial of these programs is Minnesota's Early Childhood Health and Developmental Screening Program (ECS), which is operated by the Department of Education. Through ECS and a related early intervention program, health and developmental screening that is aligned with EPSDT is available to all Minnesota children from birth through age five in each of Minnesota's 339 school districts. School districts are required to offer screening to all children at least once before school entrance. Participation in screening is a requirement for children prior to public school kindergarten enrollment. As part of ECS, school districts are required to report screening data at the child level to the Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System, a process that includes assigning the screened child a unique identifier.

Implementation of the online screening tools will increase access to valid and reliable health and development and mental health screening instruments and will improve the provision of high-quality screening across systems, including education, local public health, home visiting, health care, social service, and Head Start. This strategy will also improve fidelity of the scoring of the screening results. A Wilder Research evaluation (Holm-Hanson, 2009) of 500 children participating in the Ramsey County Foundations for Success grant found that the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ-SE) screenings administered using paper were scored incorrectly 35% of the time (even when additional training was offered), and families were often given an incorrect questionnaire based on the age of the child. Using online, audio, or other technology platforms will virtually eliminate errors in administration and scoring of the instrument. (Note that the ASQ and ASQ-SE are available in Hmong, English, Spanish and Somali audio versions.)



**Activity 2.1:** Develop detailed training and implementation plan to conduct on-line assessment with both instruments in the seven-county Metropolitan Area, Itasca County, and on the White Earth Reservation. Included in this plan are strategies to secure appropriate participation of clinics and programs serving Children with High Needs.

**Activity 2.2:** Provide online access to both instruments through existing websites designed specifically for parents (e.g., Minnesota Parents Know, <http://mnparentsknow.info>, and Is Your Child Ready, <http://www.isyourchildready.com>).

**Activity 2.3:** Monitor frequency of use and penetration within pilot areas for online access to screening.

**Activity 2.4:** Provide specific outreach to encourage parent access and use through targeted service providers (health care providers, Head Start, and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs).

**Activity 2.5:** Evaluate the effectiveness of the online screening in reaching Children with High Needs and increasing valid and reliable developmental and mental health screening.

**Goal 3: Improve the ability of ELD Programs and Early Childhood Educators to choose, use, and interpret assessment data.**

**Activity 3.1:** Improve the skills of Early Childhood Educators to use both formative and environmental assessment data already collected in their programs to identify factors promoting (or inhibiting) child developmental achievements, and to use these data to systematically change programs, services, or supports to improve child outcomes.

A recent Minnesota survey of early childhood professional development access and needs (Pierce & Chase, 2007) notes that while all or most early childhood professionals have training in health, nutrition, and safety, only 35% of family child care providers and 59% of center-based providers have had any training on assessment and the use of assessment data to meet individual needs. According to this survey, professionals indicated that the largest barriers to participating in further training were the cost of that activity and the scheduling challenges related to getting time off and traveling to a distant site. Participants of current online offerings by the University of Minnesota Assessment and Training Center at the Center for Early Education and Development (Appendix 28), the operational partner here, note flexibility of scheduling as one particular asset. As a result, our approach will build online training resources (i.e., always-available, always “local” training activities) developed by the Assessment and Training Center

(an academic center with expertise in assessment and in the development of online training).

Steps include:

- Specify focus and delivery mechanisms for future training by reviewing survey data collected from existing Centers of Excellence (regional, cross-sector councils responsible for professional development in their area; see D2 for more information), with a specific focus on benefits and gaps of past training and needs for future online offerings.
- Assess training needs of providers who serve Children with High Needs, as well as barriers to participation (e.g., incentives, time off).
- Develop six to eight modules for online instruction (including online and ancillary materials), then test and refine delivery of these modules for Early Childhood Educators throughout the state, including provider satisfaction evaluations, direct or indirect measures of provider behavior, or program feature change as result of training. Modules will be aligned with Minnesota's Workforce Knowledge and Development Framework.
- Provide modules for dissemination and use through existing professional development and training channels, including Departments of Education and Human Services and regional Resource and Referral agencies.

**Activity 3.2:** Build capacity for sustaining improved professional developmental around child and environmental assessment in communities with high ratios of Children with High Needs.

Given the relatively short history of development of environment rating scales and their use in Minnesota, we know that less capacity exists in ELD Programs or the professional development resources that support them to provide training in this area. This goal is related to Goal 1, Activity 1 in Section D2, which includes coaching, consultation, and mentoring on child and program assessment and services to children with special needs. Implementation is most likely to be effective when professional development information-sharing is paired with more intensive and applied coaching work (Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005). Steps include:

- Conduct detailed analysis of relation between Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (Minnesota's Early Learning and Development Standards) and environment rating assessments currently used in our state to identify ways in which assessment information relates to, or indicates, aspects of these Standards. Review this information with staff from Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services, as well as administrators

and program directors. Identify assessment instruments that best represent or describe program performance relative to these Standards.

- Develop, test/evaluate, and refine relationship-based professional development protocols that can be disseminated to Centers of Excellence throughout the state for on-site assessment and coaching. These protocols will include specification of data collection instruments and procedures, data analysis and utilization standards, development of intervention targets, and coaching strategies for meeting these targets in family- and center-based ELD Programs.
- Test implementation fidelity and efficacy when implemented by Centers of Excellence staff, and design or refine protocols as needed.

**Goal 4: Increasing capacity to connect and coordinate intervention across data sources to increase coordination and efficiency of ELD services**

Activities in this goal will expand the use of electronic Cooperative Personalized Learning Plans (CPLPs), a virtual “early warning and response system” developed by TIES (Appendix 29) for individual decision making with leading indicators about children’s development and behavior. Assessment data is only useful when it is used for making decisions. The challenge of multiple settings and little time for program planning make it difficult to put assessment data, from indicators to more comprehensive data, into practice. Web-based software tools such as the CPLP are designed to support educators and can also provide a form of coaching, by guiding the user—not by making decisions for them, but by providing a restricted range of options that prevent inappropriate decisions from being made (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). The CPLP allows adults in a variety of settings to see leading indicators of children’s skills and behavior, allowing for changes in instruction and activities that will improve the child’s developmental trajectory.

**Activity 4.1:** Form a Pre-kindergarten Cooperative Personalized Learning Plans expansion advisory group to review the current CPLP, survey potential users (e.g., parents, Early Childhood Educators, various geographic and cultural groups) and to plan for revisions and refinements that will increase its utility in ELD Programs.

**Activity 4.2:** Adapt existing software to produce a web-accessible format appropriate for use in ELD Programs.

**Activity 4.3:** Pilot improved version in ten sites, including the four Early Learning Challenge Target Communities.

**Activity 4.4:** Develop a plan for statewide use, including a business plan for long-term sustainability.

**Goal 5: Implement a public, system-wide School Readiness Report Card with indicators of how our system is doing.**

Monitoring the effects of a comprehensive assessment and data system—including investigations of whether it builds the capacity of staff, how well it reaches Children of High Needs, the extent to which resources are targeted in appropriate and effective ways—is a critical aspect of that system’s success (Baker, Linn, Herman, & Koretz, 2002). Minnesota’s key findings will be highlighted in 10 fact sheets, providing information on the status and well-being of Minnesota’s Children with High Needs (Appendix 30). Topics may include children with disabilities, healthy development in low-income families, and access to quality early learning in high need communities. The final topics will be determined in consultation with the Early Learning Council.

**Activity 5.1:** Working in public-private partnership, identify important trailing indicators of system development, implementation, and effectiveness, and select data elements to be reported describing these indicators over time. Develop School Readiness Report Card public-private planning and implementation team with Department of Education leadership and data staff and in conjunction with Wilder Research staff.

**Activity 5.2** Gather data for all indicators for previous five years.

**Activity 5.3** Develop reporting and query formats for Department of Education website, with data reports that align and provide public access to School Readiness Report Card.

**Activity 5.4** Continue data collection and reporting until 2021, with annual analysis of differences and trends by program type, income group, race, ethnicity, and region.

**Realistic Timeline**

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
<b>C2. Comprehensive Assessment System</b>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Goal 1: Establish Task Force</b>																

1.1: Appoint members and establish scope																	
1.2: Establish deliverables																	
<b>Goal 2: Improve screening availability</b>																	
2.1 Develop training and implementation plan																	
2.2 Launch online access																	
2.3 Monitor use and penetration																	
2.4 Provide outreach to parents																	
2.5 Evaluate effectiveness																	
<b>Goal 3: Improve ability to choose, use, and interpret assessment data.</b>																	
3.1 Improve skills of educators to use formative and environmental assessment																	
a. Specify focus and delivery mechanisms																	
b. Assess training needs																	
c. Develop training modules.																	
d. Provide modules																	
3.2 Sustain improved professional development																	
a. Analyze ECIPs and environmental rating tools																	
b. Refine relationship-based professional																	

development protocols																			
c. Test implementation																			
<b>Goal 4: Cooperative Personalized Learning Plans</b>																			
4.1 Form advisory group																			
4.2 Adapt existing software																			
4.3 Pilot software																			
4.4 Plan for statewide use.																			
<b>Goal 5: School Readiness Report Card</b>																			
5.1 Identify indicators and select data elements																			
5.2 Gather data for previous 5 years																			
5.3 Develop reporting query formats																			
5.4 Continue data collection and reporting																			

**Responsible Parties**

The Minnesota Office of Early Learning, with advice and consultation from the Chair of the Minnesota Early Learning Council, will be responsible for initiating and monitoring Goal 1, including hiring the Project Consultant, and for ensuring that the results of this effort are utilized fully. The Project Consultant and Chair of this Task Force will consult with the Director and Chair and will be responsible for managing the Task Force work generally, as well as coordinating staff resources and support. At the conclusion of this planned work, the Office of Early Learning Director and Early Learning Council Chair will be responsible for discussing

Task Force recommendations with members of the Children's Cabinet and for planning next steps to implement selected Task Force recommendations.

The Minnesota Office of Early Learning will oversee Goal 2, in collaboration with the Departments of Health, Human Services, and Education; and the Interagency Developmental Screening Task Force.

The Assessment and Training Center (ATC) at the University of Minnesota's Center for Early Education and Development is the lead party for Goal 3, under the direction of the Minnesota Office of Early Learning. The Minnesota Office of Early Learning will be responsible for leading discussion of final module topics and outlines. The Minnesota Office of Early Learning will be the lead on Goal 4 and will work with TIES, a Minnesota-based educational technology collaborative and the original developer of the Comprehensive Personalized Learning Plan.

Goal 5 will be led by a public-private partnership between the Wilder Foundation, the Minnesota Office of Early Learning, the Minnesota Early Learning Council, and data analysts from the Departments of Education and Human Services.

### **Appropriate Financial Resources**

**\$ 18,912,824 Public Funds (Part C and EC Screening)**

**\$ 2,225,166 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$21,137,990 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

For more detail on this budget, please see A4 and related budget spreadsheets.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Appendix 28: Summary and description of Assessment and Training Center
- Appendix 29: TIES Cooperative Personalized Learning Plan description
- Appendix 30: School Readiness Report Card Report
- Letters of support: TIES, University of Minnesota, Center for Early Education and Development

### **Addressing Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs**

The activities in Goal 1 will build on work described in other aspects of this plan (especially B1, program quality assessment; E1, Kindergarten Entry Assessment; and E2, coordinated data system) and will ultimately provide recommendations for implementation across all program types.

Many of the work products of these goals will be immediately accessible to ELD Programs. Because of the accessible nature of the online versions of ASQ and ASQ-SE, all types of ELD Programs will have access following the activities in Goal 2. The Comprehensive Personalized Learning Plan is, as one of its central design elements, intended for use across a wide variety of education and human service programs. As a result, with the tailoring expected for use in ELD Programs planned here, the resulting CPLP is expected to be both feasible and useful for implementation across ELD Program types. And, the School Readiness Report Card will, as a matter of design, report status and changes over time for each ELD Program type.

To the extent possible or appropriate, given needs data, training in Goal 3 will be “generic” across program types; however, we also expect needs data to highlight program-specific needs that can and should be addressed in module development. We also expect information gathered during design and testing to highlight needs to target or localize these protocols. These program-specific alternatives will be considered in review of design plans with the Office of Early Learning, and will factor directly in protocol development and testing.

### **Meeting Needs of Children with High Needs (Including Special Populations)**

Nowhere is the expression “a rising tide lifts all boats” more true than in system-level descriptions of school readiness efforts. Keeping that in mind, the work described throughout this section is designed to meet the needs of Children with High Needs (as well as other children) by coordinating assessment data collection and making the tools and results accessible and comprehensible to all.

Goal 1 increases the rigor, efficiency, utility, and coordination of data collection and utilization in ways that contribute to both individual-level monitoring and program improvement, and to overall system improvement over time. The subsequent rollout of online screening in Goal 2 will help provide more opportunities for providers and families of Children with High Needs to complete accurate screening by increasing access in a variety of time-efficient and linguistically appropriate ways. The Contractor hired for implementation and outreach for this improvement will work most closely and do outreach with public and private programs that reach Children with High Needs and their families.

We expect the training in Goal 3 to support improved services to Children with High Needs directly by bringing expanded capacity to programs that serve these children, and by



giving the professionals in these programs greater capacity for using data that support both individual and program-level improvement.

The Office of Early Learning will work with Assessment and Training Center, other institutions of higher education, and training groups to develop a plan that will focus especially on providers of Children with High Needs and the gaps and barriers they have in assessment training. This will include connecting providers with mental health professionals trained to assess and serve young children with mental health conditions. This is consistent with 2007 state legislation that allocated funds to develop early childhood mental health professionals and provide clinical mental health services to uninsured and underinsured children birth to five and their families (2007 Minnesota Laws chapter 147.HF1078-3E, article 8, section 8).

Complexity of individual and family needs, and an attendant variety of services and supports from multiple child and family-serving programs, is characteristic of many Children with High Needs. Further, the duplication or fragmentation of services and supports that accompany these varied needs is a major obstacle to effective services for these children and their families. As a result, the CPLP to be refined and pilot-tested in Goal 4 is designed specifically to improve all programs' ability to meet more of the specific needs of this population, and to do so more efficiently.

Finally, Goal 5 delivers a report of results directly to Minnesotans. Given the intent of our statewide system to promote school readiness for all children, including those with high needs—and the School Readiness Report Card's design to report outcomes for all children and for many subgroups of children (including those living in poverty, who have disabilities, or who are members of new immigrant communities)—parents, tax payers, program staff, and policymakers in Minnesota will have a close-up and moving picture of the success of their efforts to serve each as they work to serve all.

## **D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce**

*Note: The total available points for (D)(1) and (D)(2) = 40. The 40 available points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D), each criterion will be worth up to 20 points.*

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

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

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--

(a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;

(b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

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

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

Evidence for (D)(1):

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

designed to promote children's learning and development and improve outcomes.

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

High-quality early education experiences are critical for improving the educational outcomes of Children with High Needs. Many elements impact the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs; well-trained Early Childhood Educators who have the knowledge and skills to support each child's learning and development are among the most important (Barnett, 2004). These frontline intermediaries ensure that Program Standards, Early Learning and Development Standards, and other best practices are implemented with fidelity, effectively bridging research and practice in every early childhood setting. We rely on investments in a Great Workforce as a key strategy for improving program quality, one of the two focal points of our State Plan.

Our investments build on our Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework: Minnesota's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners (Core Competencies), a guide that shows Early Childhood Educators what providing quality education and care looks like. We also make use of a strong existing professional development infrastructure developed by the Minnesota Center for Professional Development (MNCPD) (Appendix 31), a partnership between the Department of Human Services and Metropolitan State University. Existing tools include our Career Lattice and related Registry (described fully in Section D2). The Career Lattice lays out a progression of training and credentials to provide Early Childhood Educators with a path to improved professional development, and the Registry allows them to track their progress. Our High-Quality Plan institutionalizes continuous improvement of our Core Competencies and sets forth a strategy for increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers who align training, course offerings, and program content with the Competencies. This strategy will lead to an increase in the number of Early Childhood Educators receiving training based on our Core Competencies, which will mean more frequent application of the research and best practices that form their base.

**KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK—D1a**

The first edition of the Minnesota Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners (Core Competencies) (Appendix 32) was released in 2004; a revision process is currently

underway and will be addressed in our High-Quality Plan. The Minnesota Association for the Education of Young Children developed the Core Competencies, and their process included review by several early childhood experts and the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. The Core Competencies: define what practitioners need to know and be able to do to provide quality education and care; serve as the foundation for decisions and practices carried out by practitioners in all ELD Programs; and serve as a means for incorporating new research findings and knowledge into practice in early childhood education and care. The Core Competencies are divided into eight content areas, each of which is divided into five levels. Levels build upon one another, beginning with the basic requirements for a practitioner new to the field and continuing through the requirements for a professional who has experience and education exceeding the master's degree level. The Competencies are applicable to Early Childhood Educators across programs and sectors.

The Core Competencies are evidence-based drawing upon the early childhood education literature base as well as standards for best practice established by professional organizations. The Competencies promote children's optimal development, as defined by the Minnesota's Early Learning and Development Standards. The Core Competencies cover eight content areas, including: Child Growth and Development; Learning Environment & Curriculum, which includes the sub-areas Promoting Language Development and Literacy, and Promoting Cognitive Development (math and science); Assessment and Planning for Individual Needs; Interactions with Children, which addresses behavior guidance; Families and Communities; Program Planning and Evaluation; Professional Development and Leadership; and Health, Safety, and Nutrition. Practices to meet the needs of children and families who are culturally and linguistically diverse are embedded across all content areas and levels.

### **PROGRESSION OF CREDENTIALS—D1b**

Minnesota's Career Lattice (Appendix 33) recognizes the hours of informal training, formal education, and credentials of early childhood practitioners. The Career Lattice consists of 12 steps, each of which is aligned with the Core Competencies. Each step outlines the hours of approved training, formal education, and/or credentials that correspond to that level of professional development, clearly delineating for practitioners what is necessary to move forward in their professional development. Lattice steps one through five reflect non-credit-based training and credentials, and steps six through twelve reflect credit-based education and

credentials. The Career Lattice is currently in use by practitioners working in both center-based and family child care and Head Start. Currently, practitioners working in positions that require teacher licensure—including Early Childhood Special Educators and allied professionals working in IDEA funded programs and those working in public school pre-kindergarten—follow the mandated Minnesota Board of Teaching Standards, which are not currently aligned with the Core Competencies. Our High-Quality Plan includes a process for aligning the Board of Teaching Standards and the Core Competencies to create a common, statewide progression of degrees and credentials.

### **ALIGNED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES—D1c**

Several key partnerships with post-secondary institutions and other professional development providers have been developed in recent years, including:

- E-Learning for Early Childhood Teachers, which is a consortium of 13 community and technical colleges in both urban and rural areas throughout the state. The consortium offers credit-based child development courses and several credentials. The group has an agreement to use the Core Competencies in all curriculum development.
- The MNCPD has worked with the Minnesota Head Start Association to ensure that Head Start staff can document and verify training through the Minnesota's Professional Development Registry (full description D2) and receive a learning record that meets Head Start Performance Standards. Several large Head Start grantees in the state are also aligning their training offerings with the Core Competencies.
- Training for Early Childhood Educators working in child care programs participating in Parent Aware is in full alignment with the Core Competencies.
- Early Educators working in licensed child care settings in Minnesota must also meet ongoing training requirements that are aligned with the Core Competencies. Under state licensing regulations, child care providers—both licensed family and center-based—must participate in annual in-service training in each of the nine content areas included in the Core Competencies.

### **GOALS AND ACTIVITIES**

**Goal 1: Establish the Core Competencies as the shared framework for professional development in Minnesota and create a process for continuous improvement.**

In 2010, Minnesota's Early Learning Council, with funding from an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant, began a revision of the Core Competencies to incorporate current research and evidence-based practice. As part of the process, a comprehensive literature review compiled information on cultural proficiency; working with dual language learners; teacher effectiveness, including teacher/child interaction, assessment, and documentation of child progress; and special education, among other areas. In addition, recommendations were made on developing new guides for: Early Educators working with preschool-age children; family child care providers; how to use the Competencies in developing and planning higher education courses; and how to present information about the Competencies to policymakers.

Before the revision is finalized, Minnesota intends to use RTT grant funds to complete a second phase. Minnesota will use the opportunity presented by phase two of the revision process to engage representatives from Minnesota's postsecondary institutions, including representatives of Minnesota's Board of Teaching, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, the Minnesota Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators, and other providers of professional development. The goals of the facilitated process will be: 1) to ensure that the state has clear, agreed-upon standards that are at the foundation of training delivered to Early Childhood Educators who are served by Minnesota's postsecondary institutions and other providers of professional development, and 2) to align the Core Competencies and the Minnesota Board of Teaching Standards to ensure a common statewide progression of credentials and degrees for all Early Childhood Educators (note that Goal 2 in Section D2 offers additional strategies for meeting the related performance measures). Phase two will also include the development of additional guides that will make the Core Competencies more accessible for Early Childhood Educators working with children aged three to five and for family child care providers.

**Activity 1.1:** Engage Minnesota's higher education institutions and other key stakeholders in discussions about aligning professional development opportunities with the Core Competencies.

**Activity 1.2:** Align the Core Competencies and the Minnesota Board of Teaching Standards.

**Activity 1.3:** Create companion documents that supplement the Core Competencies for family child care providers and those working with children ages three through five.

**Activity 1.4:** Establish a revision schedule for the Core Competencies. Schedule will be aligned with the revision schedule created for Minnesota’s Early Learning and Development Standards (outlined in C1).

### Realistic Timeline

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
<b>D1 Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework</b>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Goal 1: Revision of MN Core Competencies</b>																
Activities 1.1 and 1.2: Engage stakeholders in completing revision, align with Board of Teaching																
Activity 1.3: Create companion guides																
Activity 1.4: Revise existing training modules																

### Responsible Parties

The Department of Education will oversee activities in this section, in coordination with the Departments of Health and Human Services, and in consultation with Minnesota’s Early Learning Council.

### Appropriate Financial Resources

**\$ 200,000 Public Funds (CCDF)**

**\$ 105,200 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$ 305,200 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

For more detail on this budget, please see A4 and related budget spreadsheets.

### Supporting Evidence

- Appendix 31: Minnesota Center for Professional Development brochure.
- Appendix 32: Minnesota Core Competencies for Early Childhood Education and Care Practitioners.
- Appendix 33: Career Lattice

- Letters of support: American Associate Degree Early Childhood Educators, Minnesota Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators, Minnesota Board of Teaching, Minnesota Center for Professional Development, Minnesota Teacher of the Year

### **Addressing Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs**

The purpose of refining the Minnesota Workforce Knowledge and Competencies Framework is to ensure that the state has clear, agreed-upon standards that are consistently at the foundation of training and education for Early Childhood Educators working in all ELD Program types. In addition, a companion guide to the Core Competencies will be developed to increase the Competencies' use by family child care providers.

### **Meeting Needs of Children with High Needs (Including Special Populations)**

Revision of the Minnesota Core Competencies will include updated content related to cultural proficiency, dual language learners, and children with special needs. The revised Competencies will be published and shared widely. Existing training will be updated to ensure continued alignment.



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

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--

(a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;

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

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

(d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--

(1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

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

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

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

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

Minnesota is committed to investing in the human capital development of its Early Childhood Educators as a strategy for increasing program quality, one of two key focal points of our State Plan. This section builds on the professional development system elements—Core Competencies and Career Lattice—presented in D1 and adds a High-Quality Plan for improving the knowledge, skills, and retention of Early Childhood Educators working with Children with High Needs. This is accomplished by promoting access to effective professional development, supporting Early Childhood Educators’ progression on the Career Lattice, and bolstering the capacity of the state to track and monitor Workforce outcomes. The section also details a plan for increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers aligning training, course, and program content with the Core Competencies. Implementation of this High-Quality plan will result in substantial increases in the numbers of Early Childhood Educators who have completed credentials that are aligned with the Core Competencies and will more than double the number of postsecondary institutions with programs that are aligned, resulting in a more than 30% increase in the number of Early Childhood Educators credentialed by an aligned institution or professional development provider.

**Minnesota’s Early Childhood Workforce**

Before describing the High-Quality Plan, it is important to provide context for the goals and activities being proposed. Minnesota estimates that its early childhood workforce includes over 36,000 individuals working in Early Learning and Development Programs, including child care settings, public school pre-kindergarten programs, Head Start, Early Childhood Special Education programs, and our parent education program, Early Childhood Family Education. While demographic and trend data is not available on Early Childhood Educators working in all of these settings, Minnesota has invested in periodic surveys of its Early Educator workforce that provide important insights (Chase, 2001; Pierce & Chase, 2007; Chase, et al., in press). The 2006 Child Care Workforce in Minnesota survey revealed that Minnesota Early Childhood Educators have a range of qualifications, credentials, and training experiences that indicate both strengths and areas of improvement in the Workforce.

Of the 36,000 practitioners working across Minnesota, approximately 24% of family child care providers have Bachelor’s degrees (10% in child-related fields), compared to 45% of

center-based teachers (34% in child-related fields) and 67% of center directors (45% in child-related fields) (Pierce & Chase, 2007). Among family child care providers, 20% report that they have taken continuing education college classes for a median of 8.5 hours in the past 12 months. In contrast, 50% of center-based teachers participated in continuing education college classes for a median of 30 hours in the past 12 months. Family child care providers report taking an average of 28 hours of training over the past two years, while teachers in center-based settings report taking an average of 62 hours of training.

Focusing on content areas as defined by the Core Competencies, data from the 2006 survey demonstrate that nearly 100% of family child care providers complete training in Health, Safety, and Nutrition, but only 35% take training in Assessment and Planning for Individual Needs. In contrast, 81% of teachers in center-based settings complete training in Health, Safety, and Nutrition, while 59% take training in Assessment and Planning for Individual Needs. Notably, family child care providers caring for Children with High Needs or children receiving child care subsidies are more likely than those not serving those populations to report a problem finding appropriate professional development opportunities. Cost and scheduling were the major barriers to participating in professional development opportunities for family child care providers and teachers in center-based settings. Over 40% of family child care providers and nearly three-quarters of teachers in center-based settings report that they have experience serving Children with High Needs, highlighting the importance of ensuring that these educators have access to high-quality training and continuing education opportunities.

Looking across these data points, we see the need to focus on support for Early Childhood Educators in the Core Competencies content area of Assessment and Planning for Individual Needs. Additionally, there is room for improvement and support for teachers and family child care providers in completing continuing education for college credits and for the professional development needs of practitioners who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Early Childhood Educators who serve Children with High Needs will be particularly impacted by progress in these areas.

### **Minnesota's Professional Development Infrastructure**

Since these data were collected in 2006, Minnesota has invested in the central infrastructure of the state's professional development system. In addition to the elements described in Section D1—the Core Competencies and Career Lattice—Minnesota has

established a Professional Development Registry (Appendices 34-35) that allows Early Childhood Educators to develop and monitor personal professional development goals as they progress through Minnesota's Career Lattice (D1). The Registry tracks information on demographics, compensation, educational attainment, and career advancement for Early Childhood Educators. In addition, with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, Minnesota launched the Centers of Excellence, a major cross-sector professional development initiative, in 2010 (Appendix 36). The Centers of Excellence project is a regionalized system of professional development that incorporates input from the field through a statewide system of Professional Development Cross-Sector Councils. Each regional council includes representatives from all early childhood sectors, local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies (Appendix 37), and those Institutions of Higher Education located within the region. The Centers of Excellence will ultimately provide early childhood professionals with technical assistance, support, mentorship, and coaching sufficient to improve practice.

## **GOALS AND ACTIVITIES**

**Goal 1: Increase the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who advance on Minnesota's Career Lattice by achieving higher competencies and/or degree status.**

**Activity 1.1:** Target supports for accessing training and education to Early Childhood Educators working in ELD Programs serving Children with High Needs.

A significant proportion of Early Childhood Educators earns low wages and cannot afford to access training and education. Data from the 2006 Child Care Workforce Survey (Pierce & Chase, 2007) indicates that over 40% of family child care providers and over 60% of teachers in center-based settings have a household income under \$50,000, making it difficult for them to pay for training out-of-pocket. As noted above, cost and scheduling are reported to be significant barriers to accessing professional development. Minnesota will target existing resources and grant funds to Early Childhood Educators working with Children with High Needs in order to increase access to five types of high-priority training and education opportunities, including:

1. Training in content areas required to achieve higher ratings in Parent Aware, Minnesota's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (D2a,b). These content areas include physical health and well-being, teaching and relationships, and assessment of child progress, and are aligned with Minnesota's Core Competencies. RTT grant funding will

be used to provide no-cost training in these content areas to Early Childhood Educators who work in ELD Programs that participate in Building Quality (an intensive quality support initiative to prepare Programs for entry in to Parent Aware, see B2) or that are enrolled in Parent Aware. Training delivery systems are statewide, reaching all Early Childhood Educators through both the Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) system and the regional Centers of Excellence.

2. Minnesota Reading Corps Training in Early Learning Challenge Target Communities (D2a,b). As described in more detail in Priority 5, an evidence-based approach to training Early Childhood Educators on intentional instruction in literacy skills will be implemented in partnership with the Minnesota Reading Corps (Appendix 38) in the four Early Learning Challenge Target Communities. Minnesota Reading Corp Members will provide tutoring to Children with High Needs in high-quality ELD Programs, while at the same time providing expert coaches to build literacy instruction skills in the Early Childhood Educators in their classrooms. This targeted training includes intensive focus on use of child assessment using Individual Growth and Development Indicators (Early Childhood Research Institute on Measuring Growth and Development, 1998), aligned with Parent Aware Program Standards focused on Assessment of Child Progress (see B1 and related Appendices). Early Childhood Educators participating in this effort also have access to AmeriCorps scholarship funds, in order to further their higher education aligned with the Career Lattice.
3. Coaching, consultation, and mentoring on child and program assessment and services to children with special needs (D2a). Minnesota's early childhood workforce is less likely to access training and support in these critical areas. This activity links to efforts described in Section C2 in which the University of Minnesota's Assessment and Training Center in the Center for Early Education and Development (Appendix 28) will develop a cadre of consultants, coaches, and mentors (housed in the regional Centers of Excellence) to support the selection and appropriate use of early childhood assessments across ELD Programs. This individualized support for ELD Programs would focus on the use of child and program assessments to promote ongoing program improvement, decision-making, and instructional support for children. Cross-sector coordination on assessment will be promoted through these collaborations. In addition, Early Learning Challenge grant funds

will be used to increase the coaching capacity of the Center for Inclusive Child Care (CICC) (Appendix 39), housed at Concordia University. CICC coordinates onsite and web- and phone-based consultation, training, and support services with the Departments of Health, Education, and Human Services; the CCR&R system; and the Centers of Excellence; and in alignment with the MNCPD training approval processes and web-based tools. CICC training on Children with High Needs will be promoted to providers who elect to meet the lead teacher training requirements under the Parent Aware Teaching and Relationships standard. The training includes progressive, web-based sessions with the option of earning Continuing Education Units. Early Childhood Educators participating in the Building Quality or Parent Aware who serve higher numbers of Children with High Needs will have access to free coaching and consultation, provided through these regional and statewide projects.

4. Access to the Minnesota Child Care Credential (D2a,b). Early Childhood Educators whose qualifications are in the lower level of the Career Lattice can benefit from the foundational, standards-based, sequenced training offered through the Minnesota Child Care Credential (MNCCC) (Appendix 40). Developed by the MNCPD, this training provides 123 hours of coursework that is aligned with Minnesota's Core Competencies, the National Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, and the content areas in Parent Aware. Completion of the Minnesota Child Care Credential will place individuals on the fifth step of the Career Lattice, where meeting the training requirements will also meet the national CDA Credential. The Minnesota Child Care Credential is currently being piloted. By 2013, it will be adapted for delivery and piloted to providers who speak Somali, Spanish, and Hmong. Access to the MNCCC will be provided as a free or low-cost training to cohorts of Early Childhood Educators working in Parent Aware rated settings and serving a population with 25% or greater Children with High Needs. Enrollment and Registry data will be used to identify these Parent Aware programs, and outreach will be conducted to identify Early Childhood Educators who could enroll in the MNCCC. An external evaluator is evaluating the MNCCC pilot, and information about implementation challenges will be available to refine and improve the MNCCC as it is rolled out to additional cohorts of practitioners.

5. Early childhood certificates or degrees from Minnesota Higher Education institutions (D2b). The final priority in this activity is to provide access to early childhood certificates or degrees through a redesigned higher education scholarship program (replacing T.E.A.C.H.<sup>®</sup> Early Childhood Minnesota by 2013-14) that prioritizes scholarship recipients who work in ELD Programs that are enrolled in Parent Aware. Since its inception in 2002, T.E.A.C.H.<sup>®</sup> (Appendix 41) Early Childhood Minnesota has awarded 621 scholarships that have resulted in providers earning 227 degrees/credentials from over 40 institutions of higher education statewide. T.E.A.C.H.<sup>®</sup> scholarships have also been shown to help teacher retention (Kerlin, 2003). Expansion of the higher education scholarship for Early Childhood Educators can help defray the cost of enrolling and completing a degree in higher education, and are also designed to increase retention. Outreach will be conducted in Parent Aware programs serving over 25% of Children with High Needs to identify eligible scholarship applicants and to connect them with application materials.

**Activity 1.2:** Expand Early Childhood Educator's use of the Minnesota Professional Development Registry and link the Registry to the STAR Board of Teaching licensure system. (D2c)

As of June 30, 2011, the Registry has 1,436 participants enrolled and assigned a step level on the Minnesota Career Lattice. The number of total participants on the Registry more than doubled in the past state fiscal year (up from 538 participants at the end of SFY2010). A key activity for meeting Goal 1 is to continue expanding the number of Early Childhood Educators who use the Registry to document their training and education and track their step on the Career Lattice. To build capacity for increased Registry participation over the next four years, the MNCPD will implement program changes during 2011-2012 to facilitate easier use of the Registry, to provide technical assistance to those needing help to enroll, and to promote participation. Though the Registry is voluntary, participation will be enhanced by tying Registry participation to programs such as Parent Aware and by developing agreements with organizations to encourage enrollment. A similar agreement with Head Start was put in place in SFY2011 and resulted in a 10% increase in Registry participants.

In addition to enrolling in the Registry and being assigned a step on the Career Lattice, Early Childhood Educators can access career advising services to assist them with finding

training that is appropriate for their level of need and that can help them better serve Children with High Needs. Early Childhood Educators who are on the Lattice at the lower levels (Foundational to Step 5) are encouraged to complete the Individual Training Needs Assessment (ITNA) (Appendix 42) to help them identify gaps in their knowledge of the Core Competencies and to take training that can address the gaps. For licensed Early Childhood Educators interested in accessing approved training through the Registry, enrollment will provide verification of training completion for submission to the Minnesota Board of Teaching to meet annual in-service requirements. Career Advisers (currently located in the CCR&R agencies and the Centers of Excellence) assist the practitioner in creating a Professional Development Plan (Appendix 43) that helps them identify their career and professional goals and map a path to obtain the training or college coursework necessary to meet their goals. The MNCPD also encourages Early Childhood Educators who access the Registry and other tools on the website to engage in self-assessment as a first step in launching a meaningful process of personal growth and change. In SFY2010, there were over 10,000 hits to the MNCPD website to access Professional Development Plans. Early Learning Challenge funding will be used to develop a virtual career guidance website that would be available to Early Childhood Educators across the state and will facilitate easy access to career advising statewide.

A critical connection that will be made using Early Learning Challenge grant funding is a linkage between the Registry and the Department of Education's STAR system (Appendix 44). The Registry captures credentials of primarily child care and Head Start practitioners, and the STAR system tracks the professional development of Early Childhood Educators holding a teaching license. Linking the two data systems will enable us to know how many early childhood educators hold credentials and their career development progress towards higher or additional credentials. To move toward a system where data on career progress for the entire population of Early Childhood Educators is available, the Departments of Education and Human Services will explore policy options for requiring participation in either the STAR system or the Registry. Early Learning Challenge grant funds will support hiring a consultant to create a plan for the linkage and for making the needed technical changes to link data from these two systems. This linkage will allow Minnesota to capture and track data about the entire Early Childhood Workforce over time.



**Goal 2: Increase the number of professional development providers aligning training, course, and program content with the Core Competencies. (D1c and D2d)**

As documented in Tables A1-10 and A1-11, a significant number of professional development providers are aligning training, course, and program content with the Core Competencies. However, more progress is needed. The activities associated with this goal, taken together with Goal 1 of Section D1, are designed to continue to actively promote the use of the Core Competencies with all major Higher Education institutions and organizations representing faculty in those institutions over the four-year grant period. Our performance measure regarding the number of “aligned” institutions and providers in Table D2d1 describes Minnesota’s intent to engage all 51 professional development providers in aligning training and education programs with the Minnesota Core Competencies by the end of 2015.

**Activity 2.1:** Conduct outreach to learn more about the barriers that are preventing postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers from aligning their training with the Core Competencies.

**Activity 2.2:** Address barriers and facilitate alignment where possible.

**Activity 2.3:** Monitor and report progress on alignment of professional development providers’ programs with the Minnesota Core Competencies and the Career Lattice.

**Realistic Timeline**

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Goals/Activities D2. Supporting Early Childhood Educators</b>																
<b>Goal 1: Increase # and % of Early Childhood Educators Advancing on Career Lattice</b>																
Activity 1: Target supports for accessing education and training																
1.1.1 QRIS training																
1.1.2 Minnesota Reading Corps in Target Communities																
1.1.3 Coaching/mentoring																
1.1.4 MN Child Care Credential																

1.1.5 Higher ed. scholarships																				
Activity 2: Expand use of the Registry																				
1.2.1 Increase Registry capacity																				
1.2.2 Link Registry to STAR system																				
<b>Goal 2: Increase # of aligned PD Providers</b>																				
2.1 Conduct outreach																				
2.2 Facilitate alignment																				
2.3 Monitor progress																				

### Responsible Parties

The Departments of Education and Human Services will oversee the activities described in Goal 1. Several partner organizations will also participate. These include the MNCPD (responsible for the Registry and the Career Lattice), the CCR&R system (responsible for outreach to enroll ELD Programs in Parent Aware and for the Minnesota Child Care Credential), the Assessment and Training Center (responsible for developing the cadre of coaches and consultants to support high-quality assessment practices), the Centers of Excellence (responsible for providing a regional hub for coaches and training on assessment), the Center for Inclusive Child Care (responsible for training and coaching on practices for children with special needs), and the Board of Teaching (responsible for overseeing the applications for licensure in the STAR system).

The activities in Goal 2 will be overseen by the Department of Education's Office of Early Learning, in coordination with the Departments of Health and Human Services and in consultation with Minnesota's Early Learning Council. Outreach and education efforts in Activity 2.1 will be supported initially by the contractor facilitating the Core Competencies revision process with Higher Education stakeholders, and will be continued on an ongoing basis by key staff from the Departments of Education and Human Services. Monitoring and communicating progress on alignment in Activity 2.2 will be carried out by the MNCPD through its grant contract with the Department of Human Services.

### Appropriate Financial Resources

**\$ 10,620,000 Public Funds (CCDF and Part C/Centers of Excellence)**

**\$ 1,080,000 Minnesota Reading Corps**

**\$ 5,415,200 ELC Grant Funds****\$17,115,200 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

For more detail on this budget, please see A4 and related budget spreadsheets.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Appendix 34: Minnesota Professional Development Registry webpage
- Appendix 35: MPDR Learning Record
- Appendix 36: Centers of Excellence
- Appendix 37: Child Care Resource and Referral System
- Appendix 38: Minnesota Reading Corps
- Appendix 28: Assessment and Training Center
- Appendix 39: Center for Inclusive Child Care
- Appendix 40: Minnesota Child Care Credential
- Appendix 41: T.E.A.C.H.<sup>®</sup> Early Childhood Minnesota
- Appendix 42: Individual Training Needs Assessment
- Appendix 43: Professional Development Plan
- Appendix 44: STAR Data System
- Letters of support: Center for Inclusive Child Care, Minnesota Board of Teaching/STAR, Minnesota's Private Colleges, Minnesota Reading Corps, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

**Performance Measures**

<b>Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(1): Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators receiving credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework</b>					
	<b>Baseline (Today)</b>	<b>Target—end of calendar year 2012</b>	<b>Target—end of calendar year 2013</b>	<b>Target—end of calendar year 2014</b>	<b>Target—end of calendar year 2015</b>
Total number of “aligned” institutions and providers*	16	25	35	45	51
Total number of Early Childhood Educators credentialed by an “aligned” institution or provider*	7,273	7,797	8,375	8,975	9,607

*\*The aligned institutions or providers aligned classes with the Minnesota Core Competencies.*

*The baseline figures provided for the MNAEYC Director's Credential and the National CDA are cumulative numbers of all Early Childhood Educators in Minnesota holding these Credentials. All of the other baseline figures in the table are the number of Early Childhood Educators in Minnesota who were awarded the credential or degree "last year". For higher education data, we are using data on graduation numbers from postsecondary institutions in Minnesota, using CIP or "classification of instructional program" codes that relate to child development or early childhood education.*

*We project that the number of early childhood educators credentialed through certificate/diploma and degree programs and the National CDA Credential will increase by 7% because of the additional supports: mentoring, financial incentives, professional development and career advising, credit for prior learning, Head Start education requirements and QRIS rating contingency. The increases in number of additional educators completing the Minnesota Child Care Credential and MNAEYC Director Credential each year are based on program projections. For the Minnesota Child Care Credential, the projections are based on the availability of funds from the Race to the Top grant to help subsidize the participant cost.*

**Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(2): Increasing number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.**

<b>Progression of credentials (Aligned to Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework)</b>	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have moved up the progression of credentials, aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, in the prior year</i>									
	<b>Baseline (Today)</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2012</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2013</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2014</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2015</b>	
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Minnesota Child Care Credential	0	-	120	-	260	-	400	-	540	-
MNAEYC Director's Credential <sup>1</sup>	43	-	57	-	82	-	102	-	127	-
National Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)	4,429	-	4,739	-	5,071	-	5,426	-	5,806	-
Certificate in Child Development or Early Childhood from a Minnesota Community or Technical College	76	-	81	-	87	-	93	-	100	-
Diploma in Child Development or Early Childhood from a Minnesota Community or										

<b>Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(2): Increasing number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.</b>										
<b>Progression of credentials (Aligned to Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework)</b>	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have moved up the progression of credentials, aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, in the prior year</i>									
	<b>Baseline (Today)</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2012</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2013</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2014</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2015</b>	
	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Technical College										
Associate degree in early childhood education or child development	133	-	142	-	152	-	163	-	174	-
Teacher licenses of staff working in ECSE, School Readiness, and Early Childhood Family Education	2,592	-	2,657	-	2,723	-	2,791	-	2,861	-
<p><sup>1</sup>The baseline figures provided for the MNAEYC Director's Credential and the National CDA represent the cumulative numbers of all Early Childhood Educators in Minnesota holding these credentials, the other baseline figures in the table are the number of Early Childhood Educators in Minnesota who were awarded the credential or degree "last year".</p> <p>The National Child Development Associate (CDA) credential is offered by the Council for Professional Recognition, which is not in Minnesota. However, Minnesota invests significant resources targeted to support and advise individuals seeking to obtain a CDA. The CDA competencies described in the 13 functional areas align with Levels 1 and 2 across the eight content areas in the Minnesota Core Competencies. Minnesota intentionally aligned the Core Competencies and the National CDA goals in development of the MNCCC.</p> <p>The projected increase in the number of early childhood educators credentialed through certificate/diploma, degree programs, and the National CDA Credential will increase is 7%. This is based on the additional supports that will be offered: mentoring, financial incentives, professional development and career advising, credit for prior learning, Head Start education requirements and QRIS rating contingency.</p> <p>Increases in the number of additional educators completing the Minnesota Child Care Credential and MNAEYC Director Credential each year are based on program projections. For the Minnesota Child Care Credential, the projections are based on the availability of funds from the Race to the Top grant to help subsidize the participant cost. The target for the increased number of teacher licenses of staff working in ECSE, School Readiness and Early Childhood Family Education are based on Minnesota Department of Education projections.</p> <p>We are not able to calculate percentages because we do not have data available for the entire population of early childhood educators. Through the 2006 "Child Care Workforce in Minnesota" study we have the</p>										

<b>Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(2): Increasing number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.</b>										
<b>Progression of credentials (Aligned to Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework)</b>	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have moved up the progression of credentials, aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, in the prior year</i>									
	<b>Baseline (Today)</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2012</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2013</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2014</b>		<b>Target- end of calendar year 2015</b>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<p><i>means to estimate the number of child care staff holding degrees, certificates or diplomas in early childhood or child development. The study does not break out degrees at aligned institutions, where the curriculum is aligned with the Minnesota Core Competencies. Additionally child care practitioners only make up part of the workforce, data would also need to be pulled on the number of ECFE, ECSE, Head Start and School Readiness staff who hold aligned degrees, certificates or diplomas in early childhood or child development. Currently data is not readily available from the STAR system on aligned vs. non-aligned degrees.</i></p> <p><i>To obtain actual data on an ongoing basis, we would want to have data systems which track the entire population of early childhood educators, not just estimates from a workforce study that takes place every 5 years. Linking the STAR system and Registry as explained in our High-Quality Plan will be the first step towards providing population data. The Registry would capture credentials of primarily child care and Head Start practitioners and the STAR would track credentials primarily for licensed teachers. A final step would be for all early childhood educators to be tracked in either the Registry or STAR systems.</i></p>										

### **Addressing Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs**

The High-Quality Plan to implement the activities described in this section relies on the coordination and collaboration of agencies and organizations across early childhood sectors. The portfolio of opportunities offered will draw on the professional development infrastructure elements already in place and strengthen new opportunities by developing cross-sectors linkages (e.g., by housing new assessment coaches in the regional Centers of Excellence).

The purpose of increasing the number of professional development providers who programs with the Minnesota Core Competencies is to ensure that the state has clear, agreed-upon standards that are consistently at the foundation of training and education development available to all Early Childhood Educators working with children and families in ELD Programs of all types across the state.

**Meeting Needs of Children with High Needs (Including Special Populations)**

While the opportunities described in this section will be open to all practitioners, the provision of free or low-cost training and coaching and/or access to scholarships will be targeted to Early Childhood Educators serving Children with High Needs. Independent evaluation will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the coordination of these efforts and the degree to which outreach efforts are identifying and recruiting Early Childhood Educators who are serving Children with High Needs. Increasing the number of professional development providers aligning programs with the Core Competencies will result in education and training based on a research-based framework and aligned with Minnesota Board of Teachings standards that will reflect changes in child, family, and practitioner populations; cultural proficiency and dual language learners; and Children with High Needs.

## **E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress**

*Note: The total available points for (E)(1) and (E)(2) = 40. The 40 available points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E), each criterion will be worth up to 20 points.*

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

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

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--

(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;

(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;

(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and

(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

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

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



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

Minnesota has conducted a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) on a representative, statewide sample for nearly 10 years (for most current report, see Appendix 45) and leads the country in assessing kindergarten entry. The data collected have yielded a great deal of information about children’s preparation for kindergarten, which has largely remained consistent in terms of who is ready and who is not. KEA forms a critical component of the governance and accountability prong of our State Plan. We have tested the validity of our KEA as it relates to third grade achievement, and have used that information to inform policy and program decisions for early learning programs and for early elementary grades. Our High-Quality Plan includes a key component for continuous examination of our approach to school readiness to ensure that our questions and procedures meet contemporary standards.

Our planned next steps are to add these KEA data to our Statewide Longitudinal Data System and to convene a Task Force to make recommendations for an enhanced tool (MN KEA 2.0). This High-Quality Plan uses Early Learning Challenge funding thoughtfully and rigorously to examine options for MN KEA 2.0, including partnering with other states that are conducting similar reviews. This Plan also will allow us to link statewide and local KEA data more deeply and regularly to the state’s kindergarten teachers, professional development, and curriculum, in order to maximize this important first year of universal education for children, and to move toward a more integrated PreK-3 system.

**Background**

Minnesota’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA), now nearly 10 years old, has been focused on informing three statewide questions and suggesting action for the years leading up to kindergarten entry:

- To what extent are Minnesota’s kindergartners ready for school in each important competency domain?
- To what extent are there differences among children’s readiness, and with which variables are those differences associated?
- How do group readiness and subgroup readiness change from year to year?

Additional work in select local areas has used the KEA to inform the years after Kindergarten entry. Given the increasing focus on PreK-3 efforts in Minnesota, in 2011 we

began work to link our KEA more intentionally to K-3 practices and systems. Specifically, our current study addresses these additional questions:

- What regional and state K-3 practices can be informed by the KEA results?
- What additional technical specificity is needed to inform K-3 practices (e.g., National Research Council, 2008)?

### **DEFINITION OF SCHOOL READINESS—E1a, E1e**

School Readiness is a construct of relatively recent interest to the public and its policymakers in Minnesota, as it has been in other states (Brown, Scott-Little, Amwake, & Wynn, 2007). To examine status and progress on this construct, Minnesota collects a statewide snapshot of what children know and are able to do at kindergarten entry. Minnesota's interest in assessing school readiness is both a public and private priority; it has remained in place with state appropriations through legislative and agency changes, and is consistently at the top of an advocacy agenda for business leaders, early childhood professionals, and those in the K-12 system.

For purposes of our KEA studies, "kindergarten readiness" is defined as the skills, knowledge, behaviors, and accomplishments that children know and can do as they enter kindergarten, in the following areas of child development: social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language and literacy development, creativity and the arts, cognition and general knowledge, and physical well-being and motor development. This definition is consistent with school readiness definitions used by other states and our ELD Standards, referred to throughout this application. To date, we have not used the Scientific Thinking domain. Our High-Quality Plan will explore the process and cost of adding that domain for consideration in MN KEA 2.0 (see High-Quality Plan, below).

### **MINNESOTA'S CURRENT MEASURE AND METHODS—E1b – E1c**

Minnesota has used a local adaptation of Work Sampling System P-4 (WSS®) as our KEA tool. This measure is a slightly narrower set of items than the full Work Sampling System P-4. It includes five (soon to be six) domains for learning and development. The full Work Sampling System P-4: has specific evidence of ethnic-based equity, both by teacher judgment and item functioning (Gallant & Moore, 2008a; Gallant & Moore, 2008b); allows for observation over time by a familiar adult, a particularly fair administrative process for Children with High Needs (Fagundes, et al., 1998; Qi, et al., 2003); includes procedures and methodology which are

particularly appropriate for our purpose (Snow & Van Hemel, 2008); can be purchased at a cost that is not prohibitive; and allows for minimum burden and maximum sustainability. In addition, WSS® has some evidence of validity and reliability for the target population and purpose (e.g., Gallant, 2009; Maryland State Department of Education, 2009).

In the last decade, tools and methods for evaluating young children's skills have improved and evolved (e.g., Wagner, 2003), and the accountability for and scope of statewide early childhood initiatives has increased. Given the importance of decisions to be made based on our KEA and the breadth of those possible decisions, the Minnesota Office of Early Learning is designing a process and timeline to review our KEA and to develop Minnesota's next version of kindergarten entry assessment (MN KEA 2.0). We are particularly interested in informing not only how ready children are for school, but also how schools can be more ready for children.

Our past and current KEA studies are designed to capture a picture of the readiness of Minnesota children as they enter kindergarten and track readiness trends across annual cohorts. The study is designed to ensure the assessment is appropriate (given the complexities of assessing young children), useful, aligned to our questions above, and guided by best practices in the field of early childhood. The tool used in Minnesota is our local adaptation of WSS®, a standards-based observational assessment system designed to provide information about individual student's learning and progress over time. Local adaptation, conducted with the assistance of Dr. Sam Meisels, the lead investigator for the development of WSS®, was intended to align the version used here with the ECIPs and with our K-12 Academic Standards. The full version of WSS® has evidence of validity with regard to benchmarking, informing instructional decisions, and tracking individual children's progress over time. The tool provides an age-anchored structure, based on commonly held expectations for child development as it spans early childhood to grade 5. There are guidelines and rubrics for teachers to use in determining if a child is *Not Yet [Proficient]*, *In Process*, or *Proficient* on indicators within each domain.

From 2002-2011, with the exception of 2005, we have collected adapted WSS® data from a sample of kindergarteners across the state that was stratified to be representative of the state's kindergarten population by ethnicity, socio-economic status, special education status, and language proficiency (see Table E-1 for example from 2010). In the weeks between school entry and the middle of November, kindergarten teachers in the participating schools observe children

and report data. Results have been consistent across the different samples and across years. Consistent with a myriad of national and longitudinal studies, household income is the strongest predictor of outcomes over time and across most domains and years of the study (see Figure E-1). While there have been trends toward increases in estimates of *In Process* and *Proficient* results, the trends are not outside the margin of error. The results from 2010 are in Tables E-1 and E-2 and Figure E-1 and are consistent with those data from past years. Each year, the study results are reported to the legislature and at state and regional conferences, they made available to the public on the Department of Education website.

**Table E-1: Kindergarten Population Compared to Sample**

	<b>State Kindergarten Enrollment</b>	<b>Study Sample</b>
American Indian	2.3%	5.4%
Asian	7.1%	5.6%
Hispanic	8.5%	7.0%
Black	10.9%	8.8%
White	71.1%	71.7%
Limited English Proficiency	11.7%	6.0%
Special Education	10.4%	7.0%

**Table E-2: Results By Domain**

	<b>Domain/Proficient Results</b>	<b>Margin of Error</b>
Physical Development	70%	2.7%
Language & Literacy	59%	2.9%
The Arts	56%	2.9%
Personal & Social Development	56%	2.9%
Mathematical Thinking	52%	2.9%

Note categories are adjusted for stratified cluster sampling.

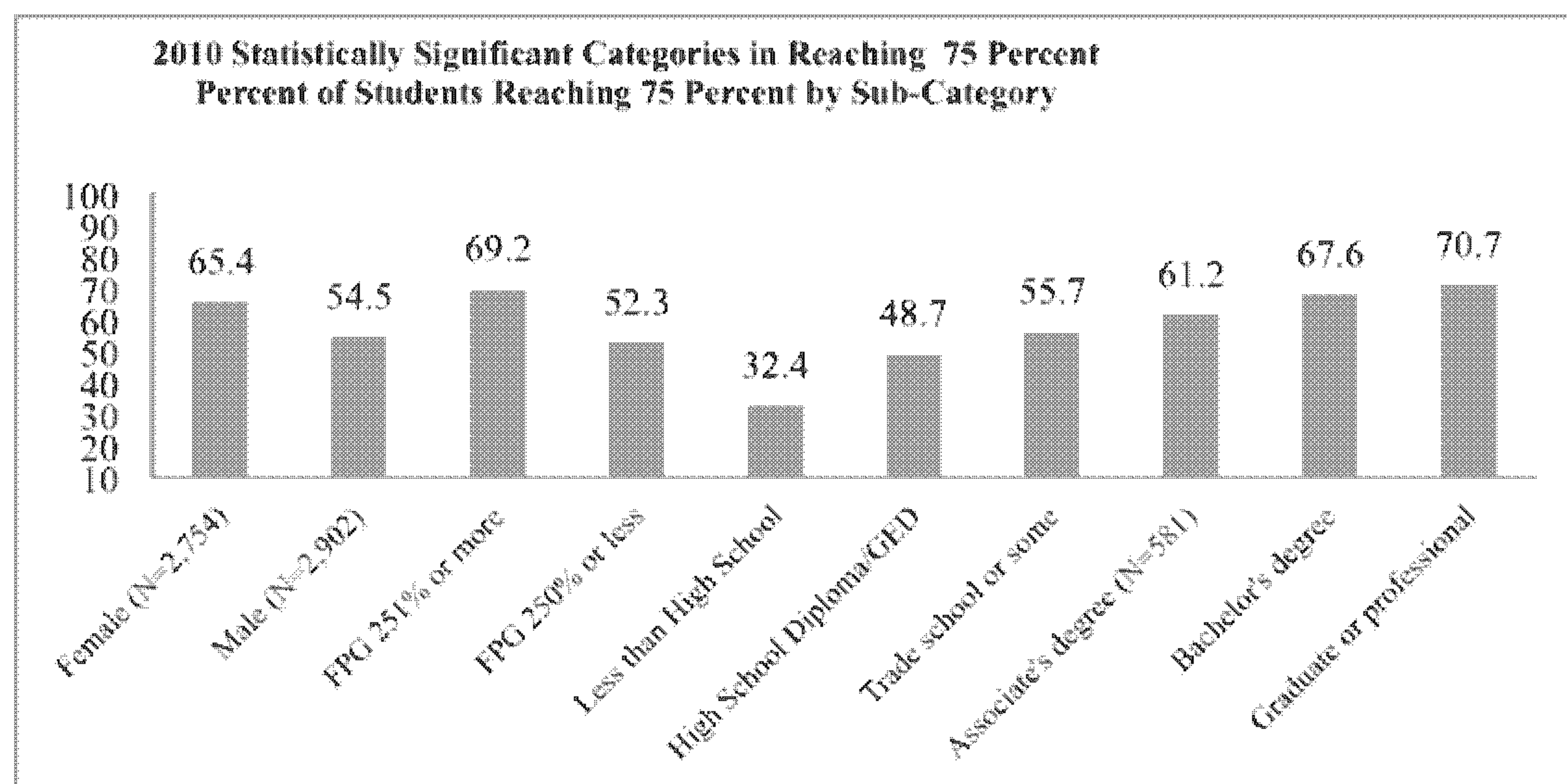
**Figure E-1. Kindergarten Readiness by Child and Family Background Characteristics**

Figure E-1. Along with Tables E-1 and E-2 above, Figure E-1 is from the 2010 cohort study, not yet released.

### KEA AS PART OF PREK-3—E1b

A significant challenge that we and other states face in interpreting WSS® for state level kindergarten readiness is, what to conclude at an aggregate level about the children who are *In Process* on any given domain. We are investigating the relation between this time point and the benchmark of our Grade 3 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA). In Minnesota, some groups have lumped the *In Process* group (usually around 40% on any one domain) with the *Not Yet* group, claiming that more than 50% of kindergarteners are not yet ready for school, while others have lumped it in with the *Proficient* group, claiming that more than 90% of children are either ready or soon to be ready for school. We have taken steps to make better sense of what scores on the WSS® at kindergarten entry mean for children's trajectory toward third grade competencies, most significantly by commissioning a study by the Human Capital Research Collaborative (HCRC), a local research partnership that is a collaboration of the University of Minnesota and the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

HCRC conducted a validity study to analyze the relationship between the Minnesota kindergarten entry results and Grade 3 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) results (Reynolds, et al., 2011). A number of benchmarks were explored to determine if they were predictive, including taking 75% of the total potential points on the 32-indicator checklist. (Potential points of 0, 1, or 2 were assigned for indicators of *Not Yet*, *In Process*, and *Proficient*,

respectively.) This 75% indicator proved to be the most powerful predictor. Based on data from kindergarten cohorts in 2003, 2004, and 2006, with available achievement test scores in third grade or information on remedial education (special education or grade retention), the HCRC found that the Minnesota WSS®, including the 75% indicator, significantly and consistently predicted third-grade MCA reading and math tests scores and the need for school remedial services above and beyond the influence of child and family background characteristics. The strength of prediction was consistent across a range of child and family characteristics (e.g., gender, family income, and race/ethnicity).

In addition to these technical improvements that look toward linking our KEA to the broader PreK-3 picture statewide, we have provided local support for districts in linking KEA to their own practices. These supports range from the yearly technical assistance materials, provided by the Department of Education, on how to use the results for improving K-3 instruction; to several locally-based, community wide conversations among parents, practitioners, and policymakers about building a better PreK-3 system. Districts are also able to use KEA results to inform decisions on the use of the following funding streams for K-3: Title I Part A, 1003(a) Statewide System of Support (AYP), Title II Part A, Title II Part D-Ed Tech, Title III Part A-LEP (Limited English Proficiency), Q Comp (Minnesota's teacher alternative compensation program), Alternative Delivery of Specialized Services, and the Professional Development Set-aside.

### **Reading Well by Third Grade**

Our plan to use KEA information for better informing statewide and local K-3 practices is strong, particularly as it relates to the goal of reading well by third grade. Our legislature recently passed program funding for "Reading Well by Third Grade" (Minnesota Statutes section 120B.112), and our KEA data is among information districts can use to build toward this goal. The statute directs that each district shall use data to identify staff development needs to ensure that: 1) elementary teachers are able to implement comprehensive, scientifically based, and balanced reading instruction; 2) elementary teachers should have sufficient training to provide comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction, using the intervention methods or programs selected by the district for identified students; 3) all licensed teachers employed by the district have regular opportunities to improve reading instruction; and 4) licensed teachers recognize students' diverse needs in cross-cultural settings and are able to serve the oral language

and linguistic needs of students who are English language learners. Further, a school district must adopt a local literacy plan to have every child reading at or above grade level no later than the end of grade 3. The plan must include a process to assess students' level of reading proficiency, notify and involve parents, intervene with students who are not reading at or above grade level, and identify and meet staff development needs. The district must post its literacy plan on the official school district web site. In other words, we now have a law that requires schools not only to identify children at risk for reading failure early, but also to develop plans to intervene so that third grade outcomes can be achieved. KEA data is one of the upstream data points that will help districts identify students who warrant extra support and plan for a curriculum that is responsive and aligned with student needs.

This new level of state commitment to Grade Level Reading is particularly robust in that it comes with financial incentives; even in this challenging budget climate our state is investing Literacy Incentive Aid (Minnesota Statutes 124D.98). Literacy Incentive Aid recognizes both achievement and growth at the school level for Grade 3 assessment results. Approximately \$85, multiplied by the percent of children attaining sufficient benchmarks, is available statewide. Likewise, approximately \$85, multiplied by the percent of children making medium or high growth, is available statewide. All of the above reforms increase the attention brought to KEA from the elementary world. A final reform that will further strengthen interest in the KEA is the content of Minnesota's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) waiver request. The Department of Education is proposing in our NCLB Waiver application to generate a list of "Reward Schools" by developing a formula for measuring which schools are highest-performing and highest achieving, based on 2010-11 test data, including Grade 3 data and also on individual student growth (which would likely require data points starting at kindergarten entry). Private investment in early literacy is outlined in Priority 5.

### **Ready Children, Ready Schools**

Our future directions and High-Quality Plan for KEA include: 1) maintaining the current measure and methods for a snapshot for the 2011-2012 school years; 2) conducting additional predictive validity studies to understanding the relations between children's performance on the WSS® and their skills and abilities in grade 3, especially as it informs our decisions about MN KEA 2.0; and 3) expanding the purposes for which we examine children's kindergarten entry. This includes examination of whether subsequent implementation of a more universal tool or

suite of tools would be appropriate to reflect children's skills and best inform the K-3 world. To be clear, this work is part of Minnesota's ongoing commitment to building an infrastructure for decision-making at multiple levels in our early childhood system (e.g., National Research Council, 2008).

As we complete our 10-year review of Minnesota's KEA practices, we will be examining the above challenges and changes in our knowledge base and practice, and balancing future plans with implementation costs. The current cost of our 10% sample is \$281,000 per year, funded through state appropriation. The nearly \$3 million cost to implement this particular tool at Kindergarten entry universally would need to provide significant added value to justify such an investment.

Minnesota is building on the strengths of our KEA process as it enters its eleventh year. Minnesota has identified a streamlined pre-kindergarten through Grade 12 system as a priority, and the legislature has committed policy and funding to direct "Reading Well by Third Grade." It is time to revise the KEA for expanded use in PreK-3 practices.

## **HIGH-QUALITY PLAN**

### **GOALS AND ACTIVITIES**

Our current assessment provides useful system-level and policy-relevant information in the aggregate. Our history and consistency in using this measure makes it an important piece of our ongoing system, even as we plan to improve it in the near future. We have significant personnel and financial resources in place to carry this out as planned, which will allow us time to start communication about the timing and purpose of an upcoming transition.

**Goal 1: Maintain this snapshot from a state sample to inform policy and system decisions both across the PreK-Grade 3 continuum in 2011 and 2012.**

*Activity 1.1:* Conduct the Minnesota Kindergarten Entry Assessment in 2011 and 2012 as planned, including data collection (will be complete October 28, 2011), analysis, and public reporting.

*Activity 1.2:* Develop communications plan about the timeline and process for transitioning to MN KEA 2.0.

*Activity 1.3:* With input from the Assessment Task Force, conduct Minnesota Kindergarten Entry Assessment in 2012 using methodology that will inform Task Force (e.g., consider matrix sampling).



**Goal 2: Link KEA data to Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System.**

Minnesota received an Institute of Education Sciences grant to create the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) to house data on P-20 education data systems in 2010. Part of that work included adding results from the Minnesota School Readiness Study into that environment. Additional detail on SLEDS, including its governance and administrative structures, is available in E2.

**Activity 2.1:** Proceed with linking all past years of the School Readiness Study to the longitudinal data system as planned and described in our Institute of Education Sciences grant.

**Activity 2.2:** Prepare, as needed and when ready, the data environment for a new data field on MN KEA 2.0.

**Goal 3: Develop and implement MN KEA 2.0.**

**Activity 3.1:** As part of the Assessment and Data System Task Force (see C2), develop recommendations for continuing or revising KEA, including sampling and content standards for ongoing assessment and developing related program improvement, professional development, and related activities to disseminate these assessments and their application to practitioners throughout the state and into relevant state policy and regulation. The task force will provide special attention to issues of validity and reliability of the instrument/s and include considerations of the Maryland/Ohio new statewide KEA tool, the Minneapolis Beginning Kindergarten Assessment, and the use of the Child Outcome Summary Form (COSF). Minnesota will explore partnering with other states that are also building an improved KEA system.

**Activity 3.2:** Task force suggestions for measures of universal KEA.

**Activity 3.3:** Hire contractor for pilot work.

**Activity 3.4:** If needed, expand and refine pilot of MN KEA 2.0 in Fall 2013.

**Activity 3.5:** Develop timeline for providers statewide to learn to administer, interpret and act on the new assessment tool; secure additional funding if needed.

**Activity 3.6:** Implement MN KEA 2.0 statewide.

**Realistic Timeline**

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
<b>E1. Kindergarten Entry Assessment</b>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Goal 1: Maintain current KEA</b>																

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
<b>E1. Kindergarten Entry Assessment</b>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.1: Conduct MN KEA 1.0	■	■														
1.2: Develop transition communications plan			■	■												
1.3: Conduct MN KEA 1.0 using methodology to inform Task Force							■	■	■	■						
<b>Goal 2: Link KEA Data to Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System</b>																
2. 1 Link past data to SLEDS	■	■														
2.2 Prep data environment for MN KEA 2.0				■	■	■	■									
<b>Goal 3: Launch MN KEA 2.0</b>																
3.1 Appoint Task Force	■															
3.2 Task Force recommendations		■	■	■												
3.3 Hire contractor for pilot					■											
3.4 Expand/refine pilot if needed							■	■			■	■				
3.5 Planning and training for statewide launch					■	■	■	■	■	■						
3.6 Implement statewide											■	■	■	■	■	■

### Responsible Parties

In Goal 1, the Early Learning Services staff at the Department of Education will collaborate with local districts to carry out the work, as in years past. The data staff at the Department of Education is carrying out this work of Goal 2. Goal 3 will be completed by the Minnesota Office of Early Learning's Assessment Task Force.

### Appropriate Financial Resources

**\$1,124,000 Public Funds (State General Fund)**

**\$ 305,200 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$1,429,200 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

For more detail on this budget, please see A4 and related budget spreadsheets.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Appendix 45: 2010 School Readiness Report
- Letter of support: Human Capital Research Collaborative

### **Addressing Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs**

Assessment of children's developmental achievement at kindergarten entry, in combination with other data on children's participation in ELD Programs prior to kindergarten (see E2), will eventually enable Minnesota to examine kindergarten entry data by program type.

### **Meeting Needs of Children with High Needs (Including Special Populations)**

MN KEA 2.0 will be appropriate for young children with high needs and will have more rigorous evidence of contribution to improving children's outcomes *before* Kindergarten entry, rather than simply reporting their skills at Kindergarten entry.

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

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to enhance the State's existing Statewide Longitudinal Data System or to build or enhance a separate, coordinated, early learning data system that aligns and is interoperable with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and that either data system--

- (a) Has all of the Essential Data Elements;
- (b) Enables uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data Elements by Participating State Agencies and Participating Programs;
- (c) Facilitates the exchange of data among Participating State Agencies by using standard data structures, data formats, and data definitions such as Common Education Data Standards to ensure interoperability among the various levels and types of data;
- (d) Generates information that is timely, relevant, accessible, and easy for Early Learning and Development Programs and Early Childhood Educators to use for continuous improvement and decision making; and
- (e) Meets the Data System Oversight Requirements and complies with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws.

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

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

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

Minnesota's State Plan for data linkages expands the state's data capacity to include critical early childhood information in a statewide, interoperable, enterprise-level data collection, reporting, and analysis system that provides information from birth to workforce entry. Minnesota's vision for a linkable early learning data system builds upon initial successes of the state's P-20 Longitudinal Data System, which tracks student information from K-12 to postsecondary and workforce. We will add more early childhood data elements into this system by increasing the number of ELD Programs that use a to-be-determined case/child information management software program to identify leading indicators for continuous improvement and decision-making. We intend for this program to populate the statewide data warehouse with lagging indicators, while also being timely, relevant, accessible, and easy for ELD Programs and providers to use. Finally, fostering an analytic environment in programs and agencies that serve birth to five-year-olds will enable the creation of benchmarks to inform practice and policy.

**High-Quality Plan for Data Linkages**

Minnesota has a number of robust data systems, including child-, program- and provider-level data, beginning at birth and continuing through the K-12 years. By creating solid data-sharing connections across state agencies, this Plan will leverage current data sets to create actionable information that is specifically related to Early Learning and Development (ELD) services and outcomes. By developing new data collections for local programs that target Children with High Needs, Minnesota will realize the comprehensive early childhood longitudinal data system that is necessary to support evidence-based decisions for successful school and life outcomes for children and families. Minnesota is basing this Plan on insights gained from successful work to date with the P-20 Council and the implementation of the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System. The Data System is led by the Department of Education, which coordinates services between the Office of Higher Education and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (see Appendices 46-47 for P-20 By-Laws, SLEDS Governance Structure, and Table A1-13).

**Key Goals**

This Plan includes the following goals, focused on ensuring the quality, privacy, and integrity of Minnesota's early learning and development data:

1. Develop an early learning data collection system for selected programs targeted to at-risk students.
2. Create a linkable Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS), managed by the Department of Education, to organize and analyze early learning data. The ECLDS will house selected data elements from Minnesota state agencies that support early childhood initiatives.
3. Create data analytic tools for early childhood research and evaluation to provide timely and relevant answers to questions about Minnesota's School Readiness Report Card for early childhood and the early learning goals set forth in the Governor's Seven Point Plan. The activities addressed in the next section describe the implementation of these goals.

### **Key Activities**

There are five key activities to be undertaken to meet the goal of creating and implementing an early learning data system: 1) establish a data governance structure; 2) identify specific data elements within existing data collections; 3) upgrade selected early childhood data collections; 4) build an interagency early childhood data warehouse; and 5) develop targeted analytic tools for policymakers, analysts, educators, and parents. The Department of Education will act as the lead agency under the direction of the Office of Early Learning Leadership Team (A3; the Office of Early Learning Director, the Deputy Health Commissioner, and the Assistant Commissioner of Human Services for the Office of Children and Family Services) to leverage institutional knowledge and successes from similar work with P-20 data sets toward continuous improvement.

### **CREATE EARLY LEARNING DATA GOVERNANCE (Goals 1-3)—E2b, E2c and E2e**

The most complex barrier in linking and sharing data is gaining and maintaining stakeholder agreements. Solid data governance processes and structures are needed to establish responsibility for interagency early childhood data collection and sharing. Minnesota will build an Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System (ECLDS) governance structure to systematically create and enforce policies, roles, and responsibilities, including procedures for collecting, sharing, and publishing data in a manner that meets Data System Oversight Requirements and complies with requirements of federal, state and local privacy laws. It will provide a structure for collaborative efforts to continuously improve data quality in a new interagency data warehouse.

The detailed plan to establish this governance process will be created through the Office of Early Learning Leadership Team, based on input from the Early Learning Council. Decision-making authority lies with the Children's Cabinet, comprised of the Commissioners of the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services.

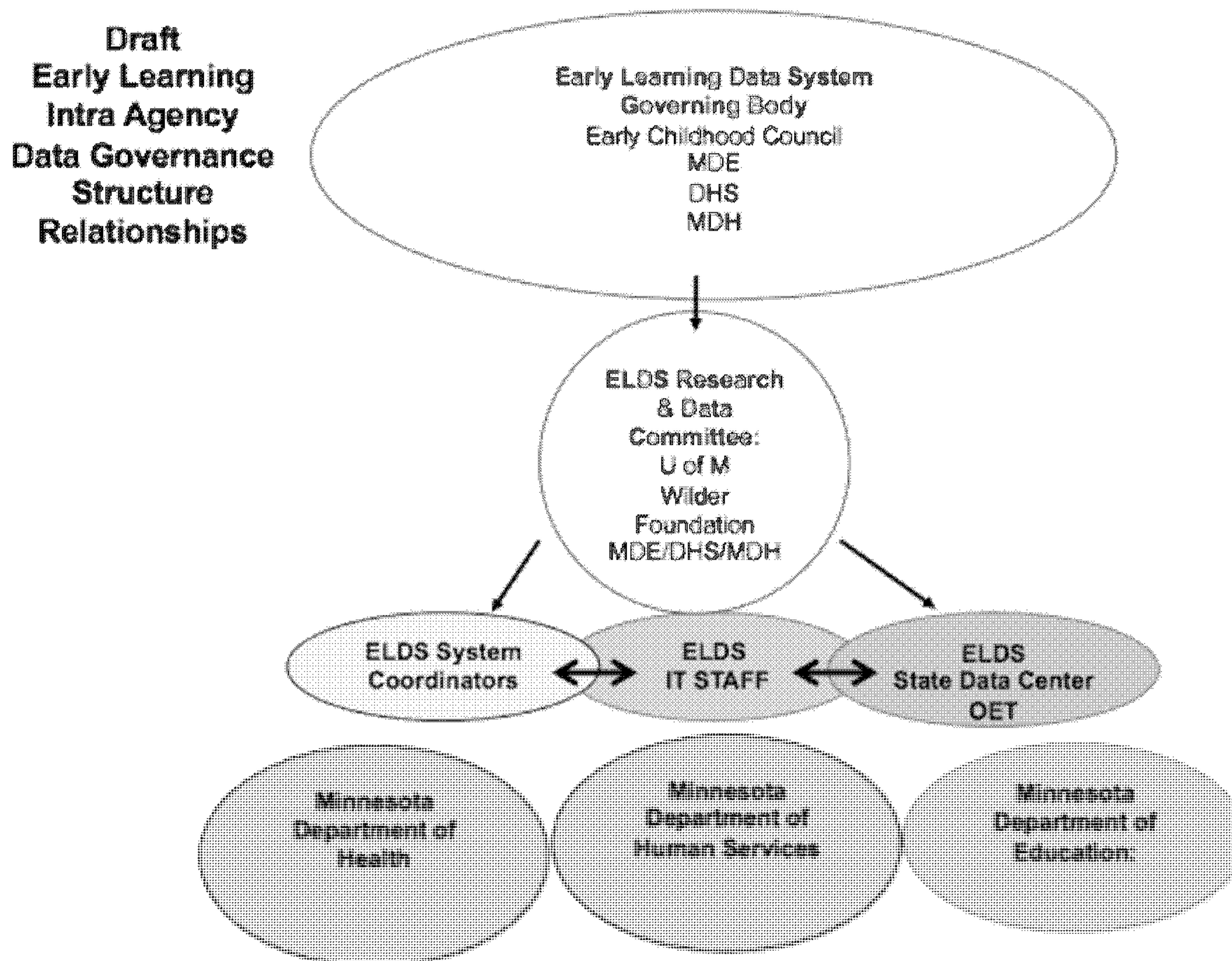
The ECLDS governance structure will include two key groups: 1) a Governing Committee, which includes the Children's Cabinet, Office of Early Learning Leadership Team, and the Chair of the Early Learning Council (or their designee), and 2) a Research and Data Committee comprised of experts in early learning data, research, and evaluation; and community stakeholders with interest in ELD-related policy questions. The Research and Data Committee will be charged with implementing the direction provided by the Governing Committee. See Figure E-2, below. Together, these two ECLDS committees will engage stakeholders, identify "data champions," and ensure the identification of key policies and questions to be addressed through the system.

The Office of Early Learning Leadership Team will articulate specific parameters for the Minnesota interagency early childhood data system, as authorized in state law (Minnesota Statutes 124D.141, subdivision 2.ix). This statute directs the Office of Learning to "develop and manage an effective data collection system to support the necessary functions of a coordinated system of early childhood education and child care in order to enable accurate evaluation of its impact." The ECLDS Research and Data Committee will identify the specific data sets across state agencies that contain information necessary to answer policy questions identified by the ECLDS Governing Committee. They will target specific data elements within those data sets for inclusion in the ECLDS warehouse. In addition, the governing body is responsible for identifying the key policy questions to be answered through the system.

The Research and Data Committee will make specific recommendations to develop the data-sharing agreements necessary to secure selected data elements for inclusion in the ECLDS from the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services, in accordance with the Memoranda of Understanding included in the Appendix and described in Selection Criteria A3. The Committee will work with the Minnesota Office of Enterprise Technology to ensure that policies are created to enforce Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements and other data privacy laws.

Transparency in decision making will be ensured by stakeholder involvement in the ECLDS governance structure as well as by maintaining a reporting relationship with the Early Learning Council, whose membership includes legislators, parents, and Commissioners' designees (for complete list, see Appendix 7).

**Figure E-2: ELDS Governance Structure**



### **IDENTIFY DATA ELEMENTS WITHIN EXISTING DATA SETS (Goals 1-3)—E2a, E2b and E2c**

Minnesota has identified ten early childhood data sets across state agencies that currently collect data in a variety of structures (see Table A1-13). Activities to enhance these data sets are described in Sections B3, D1 and E1 of this application. These data sets provide a starting point for enhancing Minnesota's holistic understanding of the school readiness and health of young children.



Data collected from the Department of Health focuses on birth certificates; Women, Infants and Children (WIC); and other health-related services. Data collected from the Department of Human Services focuses on child care programs. Data collected from the Department of Education focuses on children served through state-funded pre-kindergarten (School Readiness), Head Start, Early Head Start, and K-12 systems.

At the direction of the ECLDS Data and Research Committee, the ECLDS system coordinators at respective agencies will evaluate the structure, reliability, and validity of data elements in the context of the driving early childhood research, policy and practice questions. Potential “seed” data elements will be identified for inclusion in the ECLDS warehouse. Upon selection of these specific elements, data-sharing agreements will be developed with appropriate agencies.

Minnesota has been working with the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) to categorize existing K-12 data elements. As additional early learning data, including all the Essential Data Elements, are targeted for inclusion, these Standards will be used to increase comparability of data elements across disparate sources (Table E-3 below). Minnesota is collaborating with the Council of Chief State School Officers to extend this classification system to early learning data and will leverage that work for this effort.

**Table E-3: Minnesota’s Implementation of Essential Data Elements**

Essential Data Element	Minnesota Implementation
a) A unique statewide child identifier or another highly accurate, proven method to link data on that child, including Kindergarten Entry Assessment data, to and from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System and the coordinated early learning data system (if applicable)	Minnesota has a unique identifier for all PreK-12 data systems. We validate this ID through the use of a non-public core ID. Student data can only be submitted if it matches the information we have in the Core ID system. If it does not match, districts must update records prior to submission.
b) A unique statewide Early Childhood Educator identifier	We use this same technology for the PreK-12 Core ID system, along with record-matching software, to link student records from statewide early child hood data systems that may each have a distinct ID.

	We use a series of algorithms either to match a known individual within the statewide system or create a new individual.
c) A unique program site identifier	All PreK-12 programs are part of a single directory. As we move forward with SLDS modifications, we will be able to incorporate any early childhood programs into the new directory structure. All programs that contribute data to a statewide early childhood data system will be part of the statewide directory structure.
d) Child and family demographic information	Child and family demographic data are maintained as part of the student record. This information will be utilized to assist in resolving student identities as new data is submitted to the system for each child or student.
e) Early Childhood Educator demographic information, including data on educational attainment and state credential or licenses held, as well as professional development information;	All PreK-12 staff data are maintained in STAR, which includes demographic, education and professional data. These data will be linked to child care provider information maintained in the Registry, using the identity resolution process used for students.
f) Program-level data on the program's structure, quality, child suspension and expulsion rates, staff retention, staff compensation, work environment, and all applicable data reported as part of the state's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	The data linkage work will pair data from Parent Aware to MDE and DHS data sets. In addition, program-level data from MDE programs are maintained across several existing systems for Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education. ECFE, School Readiness, Early Head Start and Head Start will be building on the existing systems for each of these variables.
(g) Child-level program participation and attendance data	ECFE, School Readiness, Early Head Start, and Head Start will be reporting enrollment and attendance rates in a manner similar to the current practice for Early Intervention and

	Early Childhood Special Education. Child level information from DHS will include the amount of time a child is participating at a uniquely identified site.
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### **UPGRADE SELECTED EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM DATA COLLECTIONS (Goal 1)—E2a, E2b and E2d**

Minnesota has a wealth of data about children and their health at birth. However, the state lacks systematically collected information about children in ELD Programs. To meet this need using a streamlined approach, this Plan proposes new data collection be established for information about Children with High Needs and the ELD Programs in Minnesota that serve them. A new database infrastructure is needed to implement valid and reliable data management processes.

Through a formal Request for Information (RFI) process, the Department of Education, in coordination with the Department of Human Services, will seek information about automated, real-time, customizable case/child information management software options to offer a complete service cycle from intake to outcome in support of continuous improvement. The system will be closely coordinated with the TQRIS database (B3). Information resulting from the RFI will be used to issue a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) in order to select a vendor who will efficiently and effectively create a data system, building on the strengths of existing systems within each agency while developing a coordinated cross-agency solution. With Early Learning Challenge funding, Minnesota will provide ELD Programs serving Children with High Needs with a software solution to manage data and information, beginning in the Early Learning Challenge Target Communities (Target Communities).

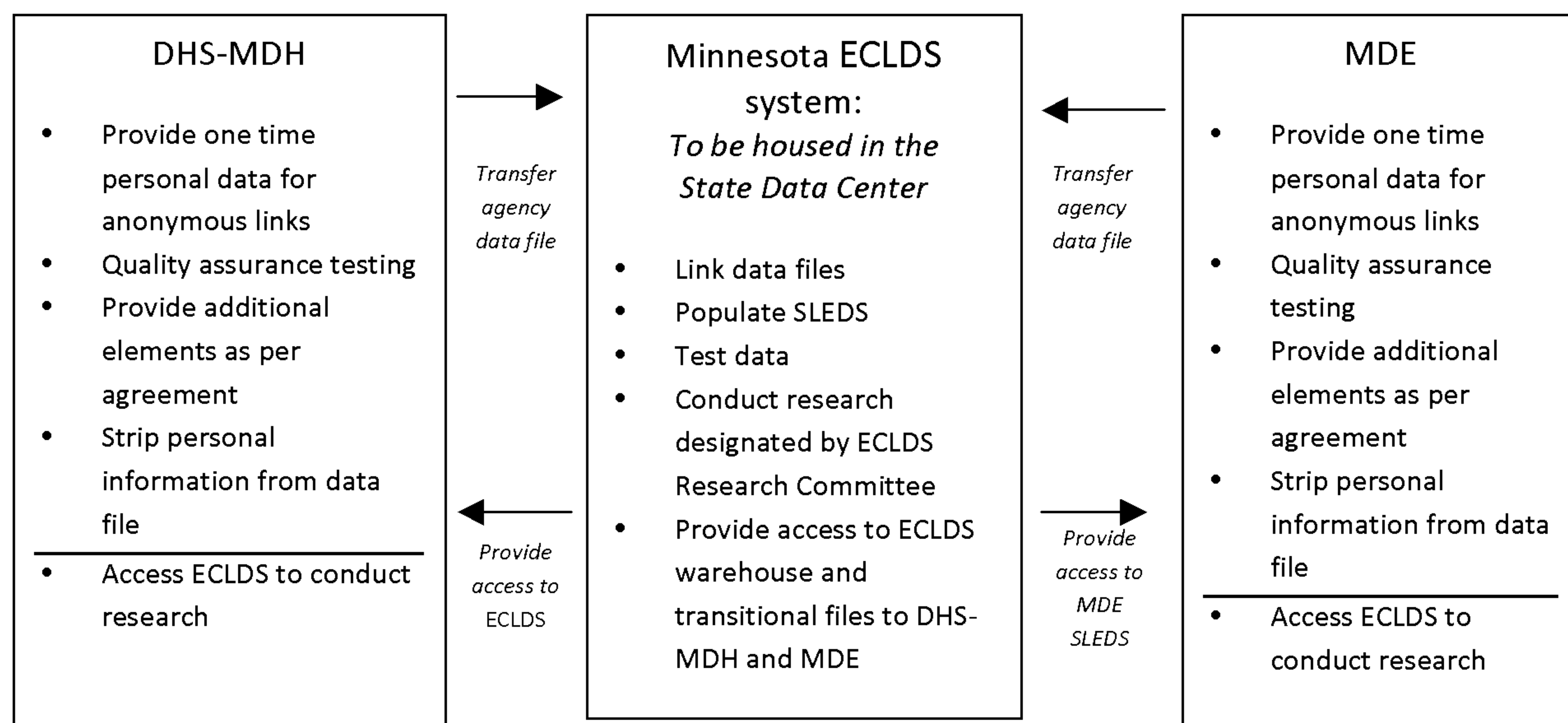
One software option that could meet Minnesota's needs or provide an example for meeting them is ChildPlus. ChildPlus is a child information software system that maintains child-level administrative information (selection, enrollment/attendance, transportation, health, and family services). It also coordinates assessment system data, including child outcomes. Information systems such as ChildPlus provide users with the ability to make real-time decisions as they relate to the children in their classroom, the families they are supporting, and the programmatic decisions that impact delivery. The system operates on a user-defined dashboard

to ensure all federally regulated performance indicators, and state and locally designated regulations and priorities are maintained in real time across multiple organizational levels. Federal and state reports are also customizable to meet local needs. As part of its pricing structure, ChildPlus includes permanent archival data at the local level, which helps inform program improvement across years. ChildPlus is currently being used by a tribal Head Start/Child Care partnership in Michigan. Based on their experience, Minnesota will explore the feasibility of using it in child care settings. Selected student- and teacher- level data elements, including Essential Data Elements, will be collected from this system for inclusion in the ECLDS warehouse.

### **DEVELOP A DATA WAREHOUSE TO CONTAIN EARLY CHILDHOOD DATA ELEMENTS (Goal 2)—E2c, E2d**

Under the supervision of its three state agencies, Minnesota has early childhood data in a variety of operational warehouses and data stores. Each collection is designed to meet its mandated needs. Since none of these respective program areas or agencies has the funding or support to fundamentally restructure their data collections, this Plan focuses on filling the need for an interoperable solution to turn disparate data elements into useable information on ELD Programs, participants, and others interested in outcomes. This Plan seeks funding to create a linkable interagency warehouse to store selected data elements collected through each partner agency's operational data system. The warehouse will incorporate new data elements as they become available. This interagency early childhood data warehouse will allow Minnesota to access timely, accurate information needed for evidence-based decision-making towards continuous improvement at multiple levels.

This Plan will use a multi-step process to link these various data sets. Initially, only directory information for records will be exchanged between the ECLDS team and the contributing agency. The Department of Education will use the data record linking software to create random, anonymous identification numbers that will be returned to the requesting agency within 24 hours.

**Figure E-3. Data Linkage Between State Departments**

Individual records will be de-identified and assigned a unique ECLDS identification number. The new ECLDS identifiers will create known children in the ECLDS warehouse data model for use in future linking efforts. Partner agencies will attach demographic or program information to the ECLDS identifiers to maintain privacy within the warehouse. All data will be defined in the ECLDS data dictionary, based on the Department of Education prototype. Full functionality and user documentation and training will be developed for this product.

### **DEVELOP DATA ANALYTIC TOOLS (Goal 3)—E2d**

Minnesota is a classic data-rich, information-poor state. Current analytic tools tend to support compliance rather than actionable steps for improved services and outcomes. This Plan focuses on the need to: 1) leverage Minnesota's current investment in a K-12 business intelligence tool; and 2) create a new Minnesota Early Learning Information Portal to analyze ELD data for continuous improvement. This portal will provide user-friendly, web-based dashboards and reports tailored to educators, administrators, and parents, based on specific data sets, such as teachers linked to students or assessments linked to attendance.

This activity will leverage the security framework and the expertise developed over the past several years within the Identify Management System at the Department of Education. This Plan will add graphic information system (GIS) display capacity to this product line. GIS will visually juxtapose location with statistics such as equitable distribution of early childhood

educators, child and student demographics, school readiness and K-12 test scores, and early childhood educator retention.

An example of a potential research study to result from this new data system is an evaluation of grade three reading and math outcomes for children whose families have accessed Child Care Assistance Program through the Minnesota Electronic Child Care Payment and Eligibility System (MEC2) data system. MEC2 is an operational system that was developed at the Department of Human Services for the purpose of determining Child Care Assistance Program eligibility and for making payments to participants. The system now contains approximately one year of data, and the Department of Human Services is beginning to do basic analysis of the data for program planning. The new data system would enable us to match MEC2 with education data (such as third grade reading scores), to better understand the relationship between experiences prior to kindergarten as well as experiences up to age 12.

In summary, this High-Quality Plan will support Minnesota's commitment to data-driven decision making for continuous improvement at multiple levels. The streamlined early learning data collection system will support local decision making for teachers and local administrators. The Early Childhood Longitudinal Data System will organize data across the Departments of Education, Health, and Human Services to answer ongoing, policy-driven questions at the state level. The data analytic tools will provide timely and relevant information to a number of work products, including the state School Readiness Report Card.

### Realistic Timeline

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>E2. Early Learning Data System</b>																
<b>Activity 1: Create Early Learning Data Governance Structure</b>																
1.1 Appoint Governing Committee																
1.2 Appoint Research and Data Committee																
1.3 Articulate parameters for Data System																
1.4 Identify data sets with ELD information																
1.5 Recommendations for data-sharing agreements																

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>E2. Early Learning Data System</b>																
<b>Activity 2: Identify Data Elements</b>																
2.1 Identify seed data elements				■	■	■	■	■								
2.2 Execute data-sharing agreements						■	■	■	■							
<b>Activity 3: Upgrade Selected Early Learning Data Collections</b>																
3.1 Issue RFI	■	■														
3.2 Issue RFP			■	■												
3.3 Select vendor				■												
3.4 Develop system				■												
3.4 Implement system in Target Communities					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
3.5 Implement system in ELD Programs statewide					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
<b>Activity 4: Develop ECLDS Data Warehouse</b>																
4.1 Define system requirements				■	■	■	■	■								
4.2 Issue RFP						■	■	■	■	■	■					
4.3 Select vendor											■					
4.4 Develop ECLDS Warehouse												■	■			
4.5 Implement ECLDS warehouse													■	■	■	■
<b>Activity 5: Develop Data Analytic Tools</b>																
5.1 Define data elements				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				
5.2 Develop dashboards						■	■	■	■	■	■					
5.3 Create training and support materials						■	■	■	■	■	■					
5.4 Implement dashboards											■	■	■	■	■	■

**Responsible Parties**

Activity 1 will be managed by the Director of the Office of Early Learning, who will work with the Governing Committee, Research and Data Committee (which will link to the P-20

Research and Development Committee, the Technical Project manager and the Data Systems Coordinators at the Departments of Human Services, Health and Education. Activity 2, Identifying Data Elements, will be managed by the Technical Project Manager and the Data System Coordinators at the three agencies, with staff support from analysts at the three agencies. Activity 3 will be managed by the Technical Project Manager, with support from the Healthy Development & Early Learning staff from all three agencies. The Data Warehouse (Activity 4) will be managed by the Technical Project Manager, working with the Data Warehouse & Analytics Vendor and analysts from all three agencies. Finally, Activity 5, Analytics, will be managed by the Technical Project Manager, who will work with the Data Warehouse & Analytics Vendor, with input from analysts and Healthy Development & Early Learning staff from the three agencies.

### **Appropriate Financial Resources**

**\$300,000 Public Funds (SLDS grant funding)**

**\$7,720,642 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$8,020,642 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

For more detail on this budget, please see A4 and related budget spreadsheets.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Appendix 46: P-20 By-Laws
- Appendix 47: SLEDS Governance Structure
- Appendix: Early Learning Challenge MOUs
- Appendix 7: Early Learning Council Membership

### **Addressing Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs and**

### **Meeting Needs of Children with High Needs (Including Special Populations)**

This system will give, for the first time, the state and each individual program a longitudinal view of the duration and intensity of children's experiences in education, health, and human services programs prior to kindergarten. This information will provide the state and its research partners with a unique opportunity to assess the impact and interaction of program interventions on the educational and career readiness of young children in Minnesota. The increase in the number of programs that use a case/child information management software program will identify leading indicators for continuous improvement and decision-making. The data system (ECLDS) will allow Minnesota not only to make decisions in the aggregate, but also



allow for analysis of subgroups of Children with High Needs, from special education to new immigrant communities.

The state will also work with user groups in ECFE, School Readiness, and Head Start to support adoption of effective software management systems, ensuring representation from geographically and demographically different programs. Working with targeted focus groups from program areas, data elements will be identified for inclusion in the ECLDS warehouse and the reports to be produced from Activity 5—Analytics.

Programs of all kinds will be able to revise their approaches to targeting different populations for intervention, track the impact of regional intervention strategies, and find new ways to collaborate across currently disparate policy and information technology systems. While local collaborations currently exist, some are not implemented with consistency and fidelity. Improving collaborations and providing accurate information will clarify trends in child outcomes. Researchers will be able to identify strengths and challenges based on the data submitted, leading to improvement strategies that are designed from the ground up. The governance structure will enable open and ongoing support of exploring additional data sets and research questions.

## VII. COMPETITION PRIORITIES

*Note about the Absolute Priority: The absolute priority describes items that a State must address in its application in order to receive a grant. Applicants do not write a separate response to this priority. Rather, they address this priority throughout their responses to the selection criteria. Applications must meet the absolute priority to be considered for funding. A State meets the absolute priority if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the absolute priority*

### Priority 1: Absolute Priority – Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.

To meet this priority, the State’s application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

The State’s application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.

*Note about Competitive Preference Priorities: Competitive preference priorities can earn the applicant extra or “competitive preference” points.*

Priority 2: Competitive Preference Priority – Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. (10 points)

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and

(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

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

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

**Priority 2 Narrative**

Parent Aware, Minnesota's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (described in detail in B) is a voluntary system that includes all licensed and state regulated programs: Head Start, family and center-based child care, and private and public preschool programs. The Plan described below seeks to target additional intensive supports for Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) caregivers, who provide informal, legal, unlicensed child care. These supports will create pathways for FFNs to achieve higher levels of quality of care in order to improve developmental outcomes of Children with High Needs. Minnesota has led the way in conducting research and obtaining legislative support for FFN caregivers, and this Plan is built on that robust foundation of research, as well as on Early Childhood Family Education, Minnesota's nationally recognized parent education program. The research studies noted here allow us to chart a path to increase quality in these settings and help interested FFN caregivers, including new immigrants, become licensed and eligible for Parent Aware rating.

Four studies exploring various aspects of FFN care provide the foundation for this Plan (Chase, Arnold, Schauben, & Shardlow, 2006; Chase, Arnold, & Schauben, 2006; Tout, & Zaslow, 2006; Vang, 2006). The survey results from Chase, et al., suggest an estimated 150,000 households in Minnesota provide child care for family, friends, or neighbors. On average, FFN caregivers usually care for two children other than their own on a regular basis, with most providing care for free. Key consistent findings from the studies, relevant to this Plan, include:

- FFN caregivers are interested in information on child development, improving the learning environment in the home, and receiving basic materials and suggestions for safe, stimulating and fun activities.
- FFN providers value learning opportunities that connect them to resources, that are delivered in the provider's home language and through neighborhoods and FFN informal networks, and that are located in informal settings (i.e., homes, ethnic organizations, community centers).
- FFN providers are a valuable and diverse part of the child care system with inherent strengths and an interest in improving quality.

Following this research, Minnesota became the first state to pass legislation (Minnesota Statutes 119B.232) to establish a FFN grant program to promote children's early literacy, healthy development, and school readiness, and to foster community partnerships to promote children's

school readiness. Six grantees from community and tribal organizations were initially funded for two years (fiscal years 2008-2009) to work exclusively with FFN caregivers. Their work operationalized many of the recommendations outlined in the previously discussed research. After the first two years, the program was extended for fiscal years 2010 to 2011, using ARRA funds. Four grantees have indicated that they will continue to provide some level of services to FFN providers beyond fiscal year 2011, due to the sustainable partnerships generated by this program. Along with the study results and recommendations described above, an evaluation of the FFN Grant program also informs Minnesota's High-Quality Plan (Susman-Stillman & Stout, 2009). One of the key findings, consistent with long-held assumptions, is that FFN caregivers are diverse in terms of culture, languages spoken, immigrant status, and education levels.

In 2009, the Department of Human Services, recognizing the significant role of culture and linguistic communities in FFN care, supported a feasibility study on creating a network for new American child care providers. The report recommended the following:

- Create a culturally appropriate network for New American child care providers who are licensed;
- Develop workshops and educational seminars on specific topics: legal, licensing, health, safety, and business topics;
- Create an advisory board to guide the New American Child Care Provider Network; and
- Identify a central agency/group that will organize or facilitate the first three years of the network.

Minnesota has continually supported the role of FFN providers, with resources flowing through local Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&Rs) and other statewide agencies, such as Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota, to support play and learn groups; home visiting; and community cafes, facilitated discussions that engage parents and providers in learning about and putting into practice the five protective factors of the Strengthening Families approach. The protective factors are: knowledge of parenting and child development, parent resilience, social and emotional competence, concrete supports in times of need, and social connections. Given the high percentages of children in FFN care, linking FFN providers to additional quality improvement opportunities may exponentially increase positive child outcomes. One means of making that connection is a new statutory training requirement for FFN caregivers serving children who

receive Child Care Assistance. In addition, Minnesota is ready to move forward in creating these linkages by utilizing two of our nationally renowned programs: Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and the Minnesota Parents Know website. Each provides parents and other caregivers with access to information on the health, development, and wellbeing of young children. Each program offers the opportunity for meaningful instruction and peer-to-peer discussion, centered on the health and development of young children as well.

### **Early Childhood Family Education**

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) is the largest and oldest program of its kind in the nation and represents Minnesota's most significant investment in engaging and supporting families. ECFE began in 1974 as a pilot program with \$230,000 in legislative funding. In fiscal year 2010, ECFE served over 128,062 parents and 122,123 children (unduplicated counts) from birth to kindergarten enrollment, and received approximately \$43,634,000 (FY2010) in state and local funding. Through the ECFE program, licensed parent educators are available in each of Minnesota's 339 school districts and in four Tribal Schools. Program staff design and implement programming that is responsive to local needs, including the cultural and linguistic make-up of communities. Focus areas have included fathering, parenting as a new American, and parenting children with special needs. Additionally, most school districts also offer an ECFE home visiting program that is designed to reach isolated or at-risk families.

### **Minnesota Parents Know**

The award-winning Minnesota Parents Know website is a key state strategy to increase access to information about health, development, learning, and screening. The site provides research-based child development and parenting information, starting at birth and continuing through grade 12. The site is operated by the Department of Education, in partnership with other state agencies, Tufts University, and the Working Family Resource Center, an organization that supports parents in their workplaces. Minnesota Parents Know incorporates innovative technologies, including weekly podcasts, monthly webinars, and quarterly live chats that feature local and national experts on child development, parenting, and health topics. Other strategies include email newsletters, parent discussion forums, and an interactive child development scrapbook.

## **HIGH-QUALITY PLAN**

Minnesota's High-Quality Plan focuses on increasing the number of FFN caregivers who improve quality of care by becoming licensed (and thereby eligible to participate in Parent Aware) or by implementing research-based practices to enhance other aspects of caregiving in these informal settings. More specifically, Minnesota's Plan targets new American immigrant providers in achieving and maintaining a current child care license and targets FFN caregivers receiving a Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) subsidy through new statutorily established training requirements. (Currently, the requirement may be found at 2011 Minnesota Laws 1<sup>st</sup> Special Session, chapter 9, article 1, section 6, and will be codified at Minnesota Statutes section 119B.125, subdivision 1b.) In addition, Minnesota's ECFE program provides FFN caregivers with parenting education and information about increasing the quality of caregiving and the licensed child care system. The goals and activities build on Minnesota's experiences and evaluation of working with new American immigrants and FFN providers.

### **GOALS AND ACTIVITIES**

**Goal 1: Create a network for new American immigrants to learn about becoming a licensed child care provider and for existing providers to learn how to gain access to quality improvement supports through Parent Aware, thus enhancing the quality of their care to promote school readiness.**

*Activity 1.1:* Identify new American immigrant providers who are currently licensed or who are potential candidates to become licensed family child care providers (making them eligible for Parent Aware participation).

The Department of Human Services contracts with Resources for Child Caring, the CCR&R district that serves the Minneapolis/St. Paul and suburban metropolitan area. In fiscal years 2012 and 2013, this entity will use an existing grant to engage in community outreach strategies to identify new American immigrants who express interest in becoming licensed family child care providers or participating in a network of providers.

*Activity 1.2:* Provide training opportunities to new American immigrant providers.

Resources for Child Caring will provide training for new American immigrant providers to raise the quality of their care. As identified in the four 2006 studies cited above, initial training topics may include basic child development, safety and health, creating a learning environment for children, or meeting requirements to receive payment in the child care assistance program.

The metro-area CCR&R will also provide training on licensing requirements and the process to become licensed to those who are interested, and information about the benefits and supports that Parent Aware offers to licensed family child care providers. Trainings will be offered in English, Hmong, Spanish, and Somali.

**Activity 1.3:** Facilitate a peer network for American immigrant providers who are currently licensed or are actively pursuing a family child care licensure.

Resources for Child Caring will facilitate a network for new American immigrant providers who are currently licensed and those who are interested in becoming licensed. The network will collect feedback about specific needs of this sector of caregivers, and provide support and information on the benefits Parent Aware offers licensed family child care providers. Groups would be offered in the host language of the immigrant providers.

**Activity 1.4:** Assess whether these same services could be expanded statewide. Evaluate the experience of implementing Activities 1-3 and their influence on retention and turnover rates and consider statewide expansion of these activities. Identify areas in Greater Minnesota where new Americans have settled and assess whether there is a need and interest in having similar services in those locations. Assess whether current resources could support expansion to identified areas around the state.

**Goal 2: Assist FFN caregivers who receive Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) subsidy in meeting statutorily established training requirements.**

This goal seeks to assist FFN caregivers who receive Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) subsidy in meeting statutory training requirements, as identified in MN Statute 119B.125.

**Activity 2.1:** Provide CPR and First Aid training to FFN providers.

Effective November 1, 2011, new providers will need to receive First Aid and CPR training prior to becoming authorized to receive Child Care Assistance payments. On January 1, 2012, all FFN providers will need to meet this requirement prior to receiving authorization. Child Care Development Fund money will be reallocated to help CCR&R agencies meet this requirement.

**Activity 2.2:** Develop an eight-hour training series on the Core Competencies for FFN providers to support ongoing training requirements.



Once a provider meets the initial First Aid and CPR requirement, they must attend an additional eight hours of approved training each time they renew an authorization. By June 2013, the Department of Human Service plans to create a series of trainings specifically for FFN providers. The training will be at the foundational level of the Career Lattice (Minnesota's progression of degrees and credentials (see D1)), placing caregivers who opt in on a career pathway to becoming licensed. The following topics will be included: sudden infant death syndrome, abusive head trauma (shaken baby), child development, car seat/passenger restraint, cultural dynamics, and supporting children with disabilities. The training will also provide information on licensing requirements and the process to become licensed to those who are interested, as well as information about the opportunities Parent Aware offers to licensed family child care providers. The CCR&R system will assist FFN providers and counties to identify training that best meets the needs of a particular provider. Training will be refined so it is culturally and linguistically appropriate for those providers. Trainings offered through the CCR&R system are offered in English, Hmong, Spanish, and Somali.

**Goal 3: Using ECFE licensed parent educators and early childhood teachers, to provide parenting education and family opportunities for FNN caregivers to improve the school readiness for Children with High Needs.**

**Activity 3.1:** Expand access to Early Childhood Family Education.

Through a diverse set of options for FFN caregivers—such as small groups, presentations, coaching and support, and traditional adult/child interaction and parenting classes—ECFE parent educators and early childhood teachers will help provide connections to and information about community resources, Minnesota Parents Know, literacy and language development opportunities, child development, and identification of early learning or development concerns of young children. In partnership with DHS, the Department of Education will provide guidance to ECFE programs to initiate outreach and support to FFN caregivers.

**Activity 3.2:** Connect FFN caregivers in CCAP to the licensing system, local public health, and the school district, including Early Childhood Screening and ECFE.

ECFE is a vital local partner in their community and is available in every school district. These factors make ECFE parent educators effective outreach partners. Outreach to identified caregivers will be conducted in concert with CCR&R agencies. In conjunction with the Departments of Human Services and Health, local public health services, and the CCR&R

system, the ECFE program will create a “connection toolkit” for FFN caregivers that includes opportunities offered to licensed family child care providers through Parent Aware and information about the licensing system, mandated Early Childhood Screening program, and local resources.

**Activity 3.3:** Assess barriers and opportunities for family support and parenting education services for FFN caregivers. Identify areas throughout rural Minnesota where FFN providers are giving care and do not have access to family support and parenting education services through ECFE. Assess how current ECFE resources could be expanded or modified to support the identified needs of caregivers.

**Activity 3.4:** Promote FFN caregiver access to parenting, child development and health information through Minnesota Parents Know.

Working with CCR&R networks, ECFE programs will provide information about statewide family support and parenting education available online including Minnesota Parents Know, Help Me Grow referral, Department of Education/Working Family Resource Center webinars and Parent to Parent Live Chats, *Early Learning Digest*, and MomEnough™ weekly podcasts.

Goal 3 seeks to maximize the well-documented and evaluated strengths of the ECFE program (Mueller, 1992; Mueller, 1996; Minnesota Department of Education, 1999; Mueller, Armson, & Rader, 2003) while targeting efforts to reach Children with High Needs through their FFN caregivers. Additionally, the High-Quality Plan will build an approach to support the licensed parent educator workforce to better represent the families in the communities in which they work.

### Realistic Timeline

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Goal 1: Create New Immigrant Network</b>																
1.1 Identify New Immigrant Providers (licensing candidates)																
1.2 Provide Training																
1.3 Facilitate Peer Network																
1.4 Explore Statewide Expansion																
<b>Goal 2: Assist LNL Providers in Meeting</b>																

	2012				2013				2014				2015			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>Training Requirements</b>																
2.1 Provide CPR and First Aid Training																
2.2 Develop and deliver foundational Core Competencies Training																
<b>Goal 3: Parenting education for FFN</b>																
3.1 Expand Access to ECFE																
3.2 Connection toolkit																
3.3 Assess barriers & opportunities																
3.4 Access to MN Parents Know																

### Responsible Parties

Goal 1, Activities 1-3 will be carried out in partnership with Resources for Child Caring. Activity 4 will be completed by key staff in the Department of Human Services using evaluation data.

Goal 2, Activity 1 will be accomplished by the statewide CCR&R system, the Department of Human Services, Child Development Services division, will complete Activity 2, and Activity 3 will be implemented by staff from the Department of Education.

Goal 3, Activity 1 will involve key staff at the Departments of Education and Human Services and ECFE directors and staff from school districts throughout the state. Activity 2 will also involve ECFE staff members who will work in partnership with staff from local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies. Activity 3 will involve staff from the Department of Education, local ECFE program staff, and FFN caregivers.

### Appropriate Financial Resources

**\$196,000 Public Funds (State General Fund)**

**\$158,112 ELC Grant Funds**

**\$354,112 TOTAL 4 Year Project Cost**

For more detail on this budget, please see A4 and related budget spreadsheets.

### Supporting Evidence

Appendices: None.

### Performance Measures

FFN providers who become licensed and voluntarily participate in the Parent Aware TQRIS are reflected in Performance Measure Table B4c1 in Selection Criteria B4.

#### **Addressing Needs of Different Types of ELD Programs**

Minnesota is including both licensed and legally unlicensed—or Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) providers—in our state’s comprehensive plan to help all ELD Programs provide quality child care to children.

#### **Meeting Needs of Children with High Needs (Including Special Populations)**

The goals and activities target FFN providers who care for Children with High Needs, especially those who are recent immigrants. Descriptions of how participation in the Parent Aware Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System helps meet needs of special populations and Children with High Needs generally is provided throughout Selection Criteria B.

Priority 3: Competitive Preference Priority – Understanding the Status of Children’s Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry. (10 points)

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or

(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

*For Competitive Preference Priority 3, a State will earn all ten (10) competitive preference priority points if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the competitive preference priority. A State earns zero points if a majority of reviewers determines that the applicant has not met the competitive preference priority.*

*Applicants do not write a separate response to this priority. Rather, applicants address Competitive Preference Priority 3 either in Table (A)(1)-12 or by writing to selection criterion (E)(1).*

*Under option (a) below, an applicant does not earn competitive preference points if the reviewers determine that the State has not implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1); under option (b) below, an applicant does not earn competitive preference points if the State earns a score of less than 70 percent of the maximum points available for selection criterion (E)(1).*

*Specify which option the State is taking:*

**X (a) Applicant has indicated in Table (A)(1)-12 that all of selection criterion (E)(1) elements are met. AND**

**X (b) Applicant has written to selection criterion (E)(1).**

*Note about Invitational Priorities: Invitational priorities signal areas the Departments are particularly interested in; however addressing these priorities will not earn applicants any additional points.*

Priority 4: Invitational Priority – Sustaining Program Effects in the Early Elementary Grades.

The Departments are particularly interested in applications that describe the State’s High-Quality Plan to sustain and build upon improved early learning outcomes throughout the early elementary school years, including by--

(a) Enhancing the State’s current standards for kindergarten through grade 3 to align them with the Early Learning and Development Standards across all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Ensuring that transition planning occurs for children moving from Early Learning and Development Programs to elementary schools;

(c) Promoting health and family engagement, including in the early grades;

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

(e) Leveraging existing Federal, State, and local resources, including but not limited to funds received under Title I and Title II of ESEA, as amended, and IDEA.

*(Enter narrative here )*

No funds requested and no response provided per federal guidance in Technical Assistance Workshop.

### Priority 5: Invitational Priority – Encouraging Private-Sector Support

The Departments are particularly interested in applications that describe how the private sector will provide financial and other resources to support the State and its Participating State Agencies or Participating Programs in the implementation of the State Plan.

#### **Priority 5 Narrative**

Minnesota's vibrant private sector has a long history of success in demonstrably improving of the lives of Minnesota families and children. Private sector involvement in early childhood issues in Minnesota is deep and coordinated. Uniquely, this involvement is not limited to the non-profit and philanthropic arms of the sector, but includes strong engagement from private businesses. Each of the important elements of the private sector—foundations, businesses, and non-profits—is organized and working collaboratively to impact school readiness in Minnesota.

#### **Foundations**

Over 30 foundations statewide participate in Start Early: Funders for Children and Minnesota's Future (Start Early), a group that supports a collective policy agenda with the end goal of increased school readiness. In 2009, the foundations that make up Start Early invested nearly \$18 million in school readiness related efforts, and an estimated similar funding level is maintained today and will be committed into the future. The policy agenda that Start Early strives to achieve is supported by efforts at a variety of levels and involves much more than simple grant dispersion. Through strategic application of resources and leadership, coalition members have helped to propel Minnesota's recent, dramatic progress on issues related to school readiness. While the group's accomplishments are too numerous to account for fully here, key successes include successfully steering Minnesota's Early Learning Council to the comprehensive framework that provided strong direction for this application, and providing near-total funding for the Parent Aware pilot project. Through its public policy and advocacy work, the group also made significant contributions to planning for the establishment of Minnesota's Office of Early Learning. When state government ceased operations early this summer due to a budget impasse, Start Early member Greater Twin Cities United Way stepped up to create a Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge application webpage that provided information to interested community members and served as a rallying point by providing an opportunity for public input on best practices and other ideas for the State Plan. This leadership has continued

through to the application drafting efforts. The coalition has underwritten the grant writing and project management for this application and is providing extensive support for the related public input process.

### **Businesses**

Minnesota business involvement on the issue of early learning was inspired by concerns about the state's future global competitiveness and took root in response to the release of a much-publicized study by the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank. Researchers Art Rolnick and Rob Grunewald demonstrated that a high return on investments is possible by prioritizing and investing in high-quality early education (2003). Influenced by the study's central finding that investments in early childhood development are a cost-effective form of economic development, CEOs of Minnesota's large companies—Cargill, Best Buy, and General Mills to name a few—teamed up with civic leaders to create the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation (MELF). Described as a research and development engine for early learning in Minnesota, MELF invested five years and \$20 million in rigorous research and evaluation to discover and describe cost-effective strategies for preparing Minnesota children for kindergarten. The investment included \$9 million to design and pilot Parent Aware, Minnesota's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, and the Saint Paul Early Childhood Scholarship Program, the first large-scale demonstration of the scholarship concept nationwide. In addition to extensive work on pilot projects, MELF invested \$4 million in research and evaluation that provides an extensive body of research (complete list in Appendix 48) on which Minnesota will continue to draw in the future.

MELF has completed its work and will sunset at the end of 2011. A new organization has emerged to fill the role of a hub for business involvement in issues related to school readiness: Parent Aware for School Readiness is an emerging nonprofit organization focused on using private sector strategies to improve school readiness in Minnesota. The organization is viewed as the next logical step for business involvement in early learning and is being established to protect the unique contributions of the business community to date—in particular a focus on outcomes, cost-effectiveness, and continuous improvement.

### **Nonprofits**

Minnesota's Future is an active alliance of over 60 nonprofit and advocacy organizations statewide that share a collective policy agenda with child development and school readiness at its



heart. The alliance includes, among others, the Minnesota Child Care Association, the Minnesota Head Start Association, the Minnesota Coalition for Targeted Home Visiting, and Ready4K, a Minnesota nonprofit dedicated to grassroots advocacy for the betterment of Minnesota's youngest citizens. As part of the 2010 gubernatorial race, Minnesota's Future hosted a Candidate Forum that was attended by two major party candidates; it was the first ever of its kind focused on early childhood issues. Minnesota's Future also coordinates advocacy efforts at the State Capitol and has impacted a wide variety public policy decisions related to early childhood development, including the implementation of Parent Aware.

Involvement from these three super-organizations—the School Readiness Funders Coalition, Parent Aware for School Readiness, and the Minnesota's Future alliance—amounts to total representation of the private sector in efforts to improve the school readiness of Minnesota's children, particularly Children with High Needs. Minnesota's private sector stands ready to make immediate and concrete contributions to Minnesota's State Plan. Private sector efforts will be coordinated and focused on supporting Parent Aware, replicating best practices, and improving early literacy. In addition to contributing resources to support the main goals of the system, the private sector will provide leadership formally, by having a representative on the Governor's Early Learning Council, and informally, with continued public policy and advocacy efforts.

### **Supporting Parent Aware**

As market penetration of Parent Aware increases statewide, Parent Aware for School Readiness (PASR) is committed to privately funding two strategies that proved invaluable during the Parent Aware pilot phase: promotion and evaluation. The program element that most distinguishes Parent Aware from other Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Systems nationwide is its focus on giving early education quality ratings to parents so that they use the information in their shopping, thus incenting all early learning providers, public and private, to improve and maintain their ratings and early education quality. Much as Consumer Reports ratings incent businesses to improve their products to win customers, quality improvement in the Parent Aware model is driven by market demand. PASR will invest significantly in marketing the importance of high-quality ELD Programs and the use of Parent Aware Ratings as a tool for selecting such programs. PASR has a planned annual marketing budget of \$500,000 plus in-kind support. It will provide 4-star programs statewide with marketing kits that include banners and other materials to promote their quality to families in their communities. In addition, PASR will

deploy internet and radio ads, strategies which resulted in dramatic increases in visits to the Parent Aware Ratings search website when pilot tested. Another tool that will be used for promotion is the business-developed website, [www.IsYourChildReady.com](http://www.IsYourChildReady.com). The site, created by Minnesota Business for Early Learning, helps parents determine whether their child is on track to be ready for school. The online quiz is currently distributed to working Minnesota parents through their employers. The site also refers parents to the Parent Aware Ratings search site.

In addition to its promotion efforts, PASR will invest \$250,000 per year in an evaluation of the Parent Aware ratings, as described in Section B5, to ensure that they continue to yield positive school readiness outcomes for children (an additional \$150,000 has been committed by Greater Twin Cities United Way to evaluate the Building Quality initiative). The final related function of Parent Aware for School Readiness will be to monitor Parent Aware to ensure that the unique and important contributions of the private sector are not lost over time.

Greater Twin Cities United Way will invest private funding in two projects to improve program quality. One of the projects will support approximately 350 child care centers across a nine-county region in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area in achieving high quality through attainment of a Parent Aware 3- or 4-star rating or accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Efforts will be focused on child care centers serving low-income families. When complete, approximately 85% of child care centers serving low-income children in the targeted geography will be able to demonstrate the highest level of quality to the families they serve. An additional program, Building Quality (see B2) will help center-based and licensed family child care programs get ready for entry into Parent Aware by providing training on Parent Aware approved curriculum and assessment tools and by providing individualized consultation to identify needs and set goals for quality improvement. Funders also have helped and will continue to help Parent Aware work well with and for traditionally underserved communities. Past efforts have included funding to better serve new immigrant communities and to ensure a diverse base of providers in the system.

### **Replicating Best Practices**

There is tremendous interest among Minnesota's private funders, and Minnesota's early childhood community more broadly, in replicating local models that bring communities together to improve outcomes for Children with High Needs. The Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative provides a powerful example of this kind of work. Since 2003, the Minnesota Early Childhood

Initiative has supported and grown to include 86 local early childhood coalitions, covering over 200 Greater Minnesota communities, with more than \$12 million in private funding. Based on local needs and priorities, these coalitions have implemented more than 500 evidence-informed projects, programs, and activities on topics related to kindergarten transition, child care quality, and health and wellness, among others. Best practices from these efforts are shared on a website, allowing others to borrow strategies and build on successes.

Other opportunities exist in the replication of larger-scale efforts to coordinate a wide array of programs and services for entire geographic areas. The rural Invest Early Initiative (see Appendix 21), which is currently operating in our Itasca County Target Community, combines Head Start, school-based programming, and child care assistance with public health services, family education, and private resources to fill gaps in programming. This example illustrates the kind of powerful, collective impact individual programs can have when they work together with the private sector toward a shared goal and is the premise of our Target Community efforts. In fact, in each of our Target Communities, there are significant examples of the impact of the private sector.

Many other examples of ELD best practices were shared as part of the Early Learning Challenge planning process through the Early Learning Challenge public input website (see above and A3). Many of those ideas informed and shaped our State Plan; others, while outside the scope of this Plan, have been forwarded to our Children's Cabinet for consideration in broader early childhood planning efforts. This Early Learning Challenge planning process has highlighted the benefits of creating an opportunity for communities across Minnesota to share their best practices and evidence with others facing similar opportunities and challenges in serving Children with High Needs. Program models, approaches to blending and braiding funding, training resources aligned with Parent Aware, funding opportunities, evaluation resources—these are just some examples of resources to be shared in ways that bridge Minnesota's disparate geographies and populations. The Office of Early Learning is already at work creating this virtual learning community, and will work in cooperation with the Centers of Excellence to formalize and publicize it statewide.

Beyond simply sharing learning, another possibility for scaling promising efforts, including the comprehensive place-based models created in the Early Learning Challenge Target Communities, is through public private partnerships. In such an arrangement, the state and the

private sector would agree to align resources in a given geographical area. The private sector would provide technical assistance for large-scale comprehensive planning, collaboration facilitation, and initial investments in collaborative infrastructure; and the state would bring Parent Aware and School Readiness Scholarships to the area. The results of this partnership would be provision of a solid set of tools to the community; an incentive for public and private organizations to continue to work together; and clear demonstration of the potential to accomplish sustainable, systems-changing results.

### **Pre-K through Third Grade Support**

Minnesota's foundation, business, and nonprofit sector is not only committed to ensuring the success of all children entering kindergarten; it is also committed to ensuring a seamless transition into kindergarten and continued success in kindergarten through third grade. United Way organizations throughout the state have historically supported early learning programs, and many are expanding to support efforts to achieve reading at grade level in kindergarten through third grade. In 2008, Greater Twin Cities United Way launched a multi-year investment to include Reading by Third Grade programs, supporting pre-kindergarten through third grade in conjunction with school districts and working in partnership with community based organizations. These partnerships stress best practices in tutoring, parent engagement, and professional development opportunities that align with district strategic plans and curriculum. In the urban core and first ring suburbs, Greater Twin Cities United Way is leveraging more than \$8 million annually to support these efforts.

The evidence-based approach to age-three to grade-three literacy used by the Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) is an exciting component of our State Plan in the four Early Learning Challenge Target Communities. As described in D2, they will leverage existing MRC funding to place trained literacy tutors in ELD Programs serving higher numbers of Children with High Needs. Those tutors focus on integrating reading, writing, and talking into all classroom activities. Expert coaches support the MRC's tutors and the Early Childhood Educators already working in the classrooms, and participating Early Childhood Educators can receive AmeriCorps scholarships to further their education in alignment with Minnesota's Career Lattice (D1).

Foundations are also playing a crucial role in this work. In 2011, both the Target Foundation and McKnight Foundation announced comprehensive plans to ensure that all students are reading at grade level. The Target Foundation announced a \$6 million investment in

the Path to Reading Excellence in School Sites (PRESS) program. This innovative pilot is a literacy instruction model developed by the University of Minnesota and Minnesota Reading Corps, inspired by the Minnesota Reading First School Change in Reading Program (MN Reading First). PRESS intends to accelerate the progress already developed in the district's current balanced literacy program, and focuses on four key components: quality core instruction, data-based decision making, tiered interventions, and professional development.

The McKnight Foundation, in partnership with University of Chicago's Urban Education Institute (UEI), announced a ten-year goal to increase significantly the number of students reading at grade level. This is an expansion of their early learning efforts to support schools and districts in developing comprehensive evaluation and literacy support for all children in pre-kindergarten to third grade. Districts working with McKnight are currently in year one of a planning phase.

Finally, leaders of the Target Foundation, Minneapolis Foundation, Minnesota Business Partnership, and Minnesota Council on Foundations launched the Minnesota Education Philanthropy Research and Analysis (MEPRA) project. The purpose of the project is to better align the efforts of Minnesota's education philanthropy community, including both grant-making foundations and business, to enable organizations to maximize effectiveness. The project's starting point, currently underway, is to inventory what resources are already being provided and to identify potential gaps in funding, as well as opportunities for coordination and collaboration. The project report will be available in December 2011.

**VIII. BUDGET**  
**BUDGET INSTRUCTIONS**  
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))

**BUDGET PART I: SUMMARY****BUDGET PART I - TABLES**

*Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category--The State must include the budget totals for each budget category for each year of the grant. These line items are derived by adding together the corresponding line items from each of the Participating State Agency Budget Tables.*

<b>Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category</b>					
<b>(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))</b>					
<b>Budget Categories</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
1. Personnel	545,363	797,156	669,725	669,725	<b>2,681,969</b>
2. Fringe Benefits	148,643	225,976	189,528	189,528	<b>753,675</b>
3. Travel	10,200	8,200	2,200	2,200	<b>22,800</b>
4. Equipment	3,800	0	0	0	<b>3,800</b>
5. Supplies	25,020	49,002	61,964	66,225	<b>202,211</b>
6. Contractual	2,397,000	4,505,198	6,083,765	7,429,248	<b>20,415,211</b>
7. Training Stipends	1,000	0	0	0	<b>1,000</b>
8. Other	3,183	3,183	2,122	2,122	<b>10,610</b>
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	<b>3,134,209</b>	<b>5,588,715</b>	<b>7,009,304</b>	<b>8,359,048</b>	<b>24,091,276</b>
10. Indirect Costs*	230,491	345,888	301,739	293,419	<b>1,171,537</b>
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners	640,980	4,994,900	8,026,680	5,532,940	<b>19,195,500</b>
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	400,000
<b>13. Total Grant Funds Requested</b> (add lines 9-12)	<b>4,105,680</b>	<b>11,029,503</b>	<b>15,437,723</b>	<b>14,285,407</b>	<b>44,858,313</b>

<b>Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category</b>					
<b>(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))</b>					
<b>Budget Categories</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	13,563,193	15,273,206	15,983,206	15,413,206	<b>60,232,811</b>
<b>15. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 13-14)</b>	<b>17,668,873</b>	<b>26,302,709</b>	<b>31,420,929</b>	<b>29,698,613</b>	<b>105,091,124</b>
<p>Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.</p> <p>Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all grant years.</p> <p>Line 6: Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.</p> <p>Line 10: If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.</p> <p>Line 11: Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through contracts, interagency agreements, MOUs or any other subawards allowable under State procurement law. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.</p> <p>Line 12: The State must set aside \$400,000 from its grant funds for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated to Participating State Agencies evenly across the four years of the grant.</p> <p>Line 13: This is the total funding requested under this grant.</p>					

**Budget Table I-2: Budget Summary by Participating State Agency**--*The State must include the budget totals for each Participating State Agency for each year of the grant. These line items should be consistent with the totals of each of the Participating State Agency Budgets provided in Budget Tables II-1.*

<b>Budget Table I-2: Budget Summary by Participating State Agency</b>					
<b>(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))</b>					
<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
<b>MDE</b>	10,158,936	16,251,749	20,393,696	17,856,636	<b>64,661,017</b>
<b>DHS</b>	6,700,874	9,250,323	10,391,352	11,676,096	<b>38,018,645</b>
<b>MDH</b>	809,063	800,637	635,881	165,881	<b>2,411,462</b>
<b>Total Statewide Budget</b>	<b>17,668,873</b>	<b>26,302,709</b>	<b>31,420,929</b>	<b>29,698,613</b>	<b>105,091,124</b>



**Budget Table I-3: Budget Summary by Project**--*The State must include the proposed budget totals for each project for each year of the grant. These line items are the totals, for each project, across all of the Participating State Agencies' project budgets, as provided in Budget Tables II-2.*

<b>Budget Table I-3: Budget Summary by Project</b>					
<b>(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))</b>					
<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
<b>B1, 2, 3 &amp; 5 Parent Aware TQRIS</b>	4,630,913	5,800,162	6,766,435	8,141,179	<b>25,338,689</b>
<b>B4 Access: School Readiness Scholarships</b>	1,394,064	3,957,984	5,239,764	2,276,024	<b>12,867,836</b>
<b>B4 Access: Title I Match Grants</b>	105,125	3,500,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	<b>17,605,125</b>
<b>C1 Standards</b>	308,930	86,900	84,600	19,900	<b>500,330</b>
<b>C2 Comprehensive Assessment</b>	5,514,699	5,281,459	5,133,926	5,207,906	<b>21,137,990</b>
<b>D1 Workforce Framework</b>	115,200	90,000	50,000	50,000	<b>305,200</b>
<b>D2 Workforce Support</b>	3,541,300	4,881,300	4,391,300	4,301,300	<b>17,115,200</b>
<b>E1 Kindergarten Entry</b>	281,000	483,600	383,600	281,000	<b>1,429,200</b>
<b>E2 Data System</b>	1,586,330	2,028,104	2,178,104	2,228,104	<b>8,020,642</b>
<b>P2 FFN Support</b>	87,112	89,000	89,000	89,000	<b>354,112</b>
<b>P5 Public- Private Partnerships</b>	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Project Support Management Activities</b>	4,200	4,200	4,200	4,200	<b>16,800</b>
<b>Funds Set Aside for TA</b>	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	<b>400,000</b>

<b>Budget Table I-3: Budget Summary by Project</b> (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
<b>Total Statewide Budget</b>	<b>17,668,873</b>	<b>26,302,709</b>	<b>31,420,929</b>	<b>29,698,613</b>	<b>105,091,124</b>

**BUDGET PART I -NARRATIVE**

*Describe, in the text box below, the overall structure of the State's budget for implementing the State Plan, including*

- *A list of each Participating State Agency, together with a description of its budgetary and project responsibilities;*
- *A list of projects and a description of how these projects taken together will result in full implementation of the State Plan;*
- *For each project:*
  - *The designation of the selection criterion or competitive preference priority the project addresses;*
  - *An explanation of how the project will be organized and managed in order to ensure the implementation of the High-Quality Plans described in the selection criteria or competitive preference priorities; and*
- *Any information pertinent to understanding the proposed budget for each project.*

The Minnesota Departments of Education, Human Services, and Health have budgetary responsibility to implement the State Plan described in this application. Individual state agency budget planning and fiscal information on the elements of the State Plan are more fully described in the Budget Part II Narrative. Overall budgetary oversight responsibilities are described in the inter-agency Memoranda of Understanding and will be coordinated by the Office of Early Learning. Day-to-day management and oversight of the Plan will be carried out by the Office of Early Learning Leadership Team (A3).

Our State Plan has two focal points: 1) build quality and increase access to quality and 2) establish governance and accountability. Implementation of the Parent Aware Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accomplishes a large part of the first point (B1, 2, 3, 5—Project 1: Parent Aware and B4—Project 2: School Readiness Scholarships and Project 3: Title I Match Grants). Quality improvement efforts will also be targeted to Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers (Priority 2—Project 10: FFN Support). These efforts will be complemented by focused investments in our Great Workforce and Comprehensive Assessment Systems. Well-trained Early Childhood Educators play a critically important role in program quality. Minnesota is fortunate to have a running start in this area, with a professional development system that includes a Workforce Development and Competency Framework and an aligned progression of credentials and degrees. As a component of this Plan, we will focus investment on strengthening our existing professional development assets (D1—Project 6: Workforce Framework) and using that strong professional development infrastructure as the basis for making significant

investments in the human capital of Early Childhood Educators (D2—Project 7: Workforce Support). The final component in our approach to raising program quality comes from investment in a robust Comprehensive Assessment System (C2—Project 5: Comprehensive Assessment System) that provides ELD Programs and Early Childhood Educators with the necessary tools for monitoring and supporting children’s development. These strategies will be supported by leadership from our strengthened governance structure (A3) and informed by an expanded statewide infrastructure for learning from our system and for using evidence to make decisions at a variety of levels (E1—Project 8: Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and E2—Project 9: Data System).

In general, the following projects have been determined to be necessary to carry out the State of Minnesota’s objectives under this application and the responsible participating state agency is identified (associated dollar amounts are listed in Budget Table I-3).

## **B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs**

### **(B1, 2, 3, & 5)**

Project 1: Parent Aware Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System [Minnesota Department of Human Services, Health]

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

Project 2: School Readiness [Education]

Project 3: Title I Match Grants [Education]

## **C. Promoting Early Learning and Developmental Outcomes for Children**

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

Project 4: Standards [Education]

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

Project 5: Comprehensive Assessment System [Education]

## **D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce**

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

Project 6: Workforce Framework [Education, Human Services]

**(D)(2)** Supporting Early Childhood Educators: Workforce Support

Project 7: Workforce Support [Education, Human Services]

**E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress**

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

Project 8: Kindergarten Entry Assessment [Education]

**(E)(2)** Building or enhancing an early learning data system

Project 9: Data System [Education, Human Services, Health]

**Priority 2: Competitive Priority**—Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System

Project 10: FFN Support [Education]

Additional details are found within the body of the application as well as in the Budget Part II Narratives for each participating state agency (Minnesota Departments of Education, Human Services, and Health).

**BUDGET PART II: PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY**

*The State must complete Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, and a narrative for each Participating State Agency with budgetary responsibilities. Therefore, the State should replicate the Budget Part II tables and narrative for each Participating State Agency, and include them in this section as follows:*

- *Participating State Agency 1: Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, narrative.*
- *Participating State Agency 2: Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, narrative.*

**BUDGET PART II -TABLES**

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency Budget By Budget Category--*The State must include the Participating State Agency's budget totals for each budget category for each year of the grant.*

***Participating State Agency 1: Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, narrative.***

<b>Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION</b>					
<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
1. Personnel	259,660	234,010	187,698	187,698	<b>869,066</b>
2. Fringe Benefits	59,723	53,823	43,171	43,171	<b>199,888</b>
3. Travel	2,200	2,200	2,200	2,200	<b>8,800</b>
4. Equipment	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
5. Supplies	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	<b>8,000</b>
6. Contractual	2,010,500	2,331,000	2,300,500	2,365,500	<b>9,007,500</b>
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
8. Other	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>

<b>Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION</b>					
<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	2,334,083	2,623,033	2,535,569	2,600,569	10,093,254
10. Indirect Costs*	106,137	85,610	73,241	64,921	329,909
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners	640,980	4,994,900	8,026,680	5,532,940	19,195,500
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	400,000
<b>13. Total Grant Funds Requested</b> (add lines 9- 12)	<b>3,181,200</b>	<b>7,803,543</b>	<b>10,735,490</b>	<b>8,298,430</b>	<b>30,018,663</b>
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	6,977,736	8,448,206	9,658,206	9,558,206	34,642,354
<b>15. Total Statewide Budget</b> (add lines 13- 14)	<b>10,158,936</b>	<b>16,251,749</b>	<b>20,393,696</b>	<b>17,856,636</b>	<b>64,661,017</b>

**Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency Budget By Project--The State must include the Participating State Agency's proposed budget totals for each project for each year of the grant.**

<b>Participating State Agency-Level Budget Table II-2 (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: BUDGET BY PROJECT</b>					
<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
<b>B1, 2, 3 &amp; 5 Parent Aware TQRIS</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>B4 Access: School Readiness Scholarships</b>	924,064	3,487,984	4,769,764	2,276,024	11,457,836
<b>B4 Access: Title I Match Grants</b>	105,125	3,500,000	7,000,000	7,000,000	17,605,125
<b>C1 Standards</b>	308,930	86,900	84,600	19,900	500,330
<b>C2 Comprehensive Assessment</b>	5,514,699	5,281,459	5,133,926	5,207,906	21,137,990
<b>D1 Workforce Framework</b>	65,200	0	0	0	65,200
<b>D2 Workforce Support</b>	1,566,300	1,566,300	1,026,300	1,026,300	5,185,200
<b>E1 Kindergarten Entry</b>	281,000	483,600	383,600	281,000	1,429,200
<b>E2 Data System</b>	1,202,306	1,652,306	1,802,306	1,852,306	6,509,224
<b>P2 FFN Support</b>	87,112	89,000	89,000	89,000	354,112
<b>P5 Public- Private Partnerships</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Project Support Management Activities</b>	4,200	4,200	4,200	4,200	16,800



<b>Participating State Agency-Level Budget Table II-2 (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: BUDGET BY PROJECT</b>					
<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
<b>Funds Set Aside for TA</b>	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	<b>400,000</b>
<b>Total Statewide Budget</b>	<b>10,158,936</b>	<b>16,251,749</b>	<b>20,393,696</b>	<b>17,856,636</b>	<b>64,661,017</b>

**BUDGET PART II – NARRATIVE****Minnesota Department of Education**

Year 1      Year 2      Year 3      Year 4

**B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs**

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

**B4: Access-School Readiness Scholarships**

## 1) Personnel: Salaries

.25 FTE Management Analyst I to manage contracts for reporting purposes

\$8,566      \$8,566      \$8,566      \$8,566

.25 FTE Education Specialist II for project oversight and technical assistance

\$12,825      \$12,825      \$12,825      \$12,825

Total Salaries: \$85,564

## 2) Fringe Benefits:

.25 FTE Management Analyst I to manage contracts for reporting purposes

\$1,970      \$1,970      \$1,970      \$1,970

.25 FTE Education Specialist II for project oversight and technical assistance

\$2,950      \$2,950      \$2,950      \$2,950

Total Fringe \$19,680

## 3) Travel: None

## 4) Equipment: None

5) Supplies: None

6) Contractual: .

Evaluation for scholarships	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
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Total Contractual: \$1,000,000

7) Training Stipends: None

8) Other: None

9) Total Direct Costs \$11,430,744

10) Indirect Costs:	\$6,773	\$6,773	\$6,773	\$6,773
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Total Indirect: \$27,092

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.

Scholarships for 3-4 year olds in Minnesota place- based initiatives

	\$640,980	\$3,204,900	\$4,486,680	\$1,922,940
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Administrative costs for local implementation of scholarships

	\$75,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$225,000
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Total funds to localities: \$10,325,500

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

13) Total Funds Requested: \$11,457,836

14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: None

15) Total Budget: \$11,457,836

## **B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs**

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

B4: Access-Title I Match Grants

1) Personnel: None

2) Fringe Benefits: None

3) Travel: None

4) Equipment: None

5) Supplies: None

6) Contractual:

Title I Tool Kit: Resource for school districts for funding and evaluating preschool services.

\$100,000	0	0	0
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7) Training Stipends: None

8) Other: None

9) Total Direct Costs: \$100,000

10) Indirect Costs: \$5,125

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.

Title I match to school districts in Minnesota place-based initiatives

\$0	\$1,750,000	\$3,500,000	\$3,500,000
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12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

13) Total Funds Requested: \$8,885,125

14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: Title I funds from participating school districts: \$8,750,000 as match for incentive grants.

15) Total Budget: \$17,605,125

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

1) Salaries None

2) Fringe Benefits: None

3) Travel: None

4) Equipment: None

5) Supplies: None

6) Contractual: (C) 1.1; 1.2, 1.5; 2.2

Contractor for professional development materials

\$8,000	\$8,000	\$9,000	\$5,000
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Contractor for creating electronic professional development resources

\$15,000	\$56,000	\$12,500	\$7,000
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Contracting experts for cross sector professional development integrating ECIPs into curriculum content and expand usage in ELD programs

\$0	\$0	\$29,500	\$0
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Continuous review of standards

\$2,500	\$19,000	\$24,500	\$4,000
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7) Training Stipends: None

8) Other: None

9) Total Direct Costs: \$200,000

10) Indirect Costs:	\$3,900	\$3,900	\$9,100	\$3,900
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Total Indirect Costs: \$20,800

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. None

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

13) Total Funds Requested: \$220,800

14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: ARRA funds supporting the State Advisory on Early Care and Education Council provide support through contracts to develop resources for Early Childhood Indicators of Progress, Minnesota's early childhood standards. This includes development of modules on using standards for coaches and mentors for \$190,000; promotion of the standards including a parent guide for \$29,830; translations of key messages for providers and parents using early learning standards in everyday activities for \$10,000, and a train the trainer for expanding availability of training on standards in relation to assessment and instructional practices for \$49,700. This contribution totals: \$279,530.

15) Total Budget: \$500,330

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

Improve providers' ability to choose, use and interpret assessment information to inform program decision and linking multi-system assessments in a meaningful way to inform policy decisions.

1) Personnel: Salaries

1.0 FTE Project Consultant Senior: Project manager to convene staff, conduct research for task force and prepare final report

\$46,312	\$46,312	\$0	\$0
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Total Salaries: \$92,624

2) Fringe Benefits:

Project Consultant Senior: Project manager to convene staff, conduct research for task force and prepare final report

\$10,652	\$10,652	\$0	\$0
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Total Fringe: \$21,304

3) Travel: None

4) Equipment: None

5) Supplies: None

6) Contractual

Stipends to assessment and measurement experts for task force

\$60,000	\$ 30,000	\$0	\$0
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Project management of on-line implementation to improve screening delivery

\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000
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Contractor for online training module developments

\$0	\$0	\$ 2,500	\$0
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Statewide Implementation

\$0	\$0	\$0	\$75,000
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Contract to Assessment and Training Center to provide professional development on using assessments, including coaches

\$310,000	\$188,000	\$180,000	\$182,000
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Contract with TIES for development of personalized learning plans

\$150,000	\$ 75,000	37,500	37,500
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Contract with Wilder for School Readiness Report Card

\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
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Total Contractual: \$2,047,500

7) Training Stipends: None

8) Other: None

9) Total Direct Costs \$2,161,428

10) Indirect Costs:     \$29,529           \$23,289           \$5,720           \$5,200

Total Indirect Costs: \$63,738

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance are identified in the lead agency budget (Minnesota Department of Education) and operated under the requirements of the inter-agency memorandum of understanding.

13) Total Funds Requested: \$2,225,166

14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: \$4,728,206 per year over the four year period.

These contribution funds include federal Part C Child Find, Minnesota's Help Me Grow program, funded at \$1,128,206 per year and Minnesota's early childhood screening program state funded at \$3,600,000 per year, forecasted amount.

15) Total Budget: \$21,137,990

#### **D. Great Workforce**

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

1) Personnel: None

2) Fringe Benefits: None

3) Travel: None

4) Equipment: None

5) Supplies: None

6) Contractual:

Contract continued revision of Minnesota's core competencies.

\$60,000

7) Training Stipends: None

8) Other: None

9) Total Direct Costs: \$60,000

10) Indirect Costs: \$5,200

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

13) Total Funds Requested: \$65,200

14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: \$0

15) Total Budget: \$65,200

#### **D. Great Workforce**

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

1) Personnel: None

2) Fringe Benefits: None

3) Travel: None

4) Equipment: None

5) Supplies: None

6) Contractual:

Contract for outreach to Institutions of Higher Education to reduce barriers to embedding the core competencies framework in early childhood course work.

	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
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7) Training Stipends: None

8) Other: None

9) Total Direct Costs: \$100,000

10) Indirect Costs:	\$1300	\$1300	\$1300	\$1300
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Total Indirect costs: \$5,200

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

13) Total Funds Requested: \$105,200

14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: Minnesota's eight regional Center of Excellence promote core competencies and provide professional development for all ELD providers. The Centers are funded mostly by Part C for \$1,000,000 per year. The Minnesota Reading Corps, which receives funding from a variety of public and private sources, trains providers to supplement preK-3 literacy instruction for Children with High Needs. Current and anticipated investments through 2013 in our Target Communities total \$540,000 per year. Contributions are for the first two years of this request for \$1,080,000. This total contribution of other funds is \$5,080,000

15) Total Budget: \$5,185,200

### **E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress**

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

1) Personnel: None.

2) Fringe Benefits: None

3) Travel: None

4) Equipment: None

5) Supplies: None

6) Contractual:

Pilot of MNKEA 2.0 to implement new suite of tools

\$0	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$0
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7) Training Stipends: None

8) Other: None

9) Total Direct Costs: \$300,000

10) Indirect Costs:	\$2,600	\$2,600
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Total Indirect Costs: \$5,200

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

13) Total Funds Requested: \$305,200



14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: Minnesota's annual kindergarten assessment is supported by state funds for \$281,000. The contribution total over the four year request cycle is \$1,124,000

15) Total Budget: \$1,429,200

### **E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress**

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

1) Personnel: Salaries

1.0 FTE Data project manager: manage the new 3 agency data system project

\$76,671	\$76,671	\$76,671	\$76,671
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1.0 FTE Education Specialist II: data coordinator for MDE data sets

\$51,300	\$51,300	\$51,300	\$51,300
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.5 FTE ITS III: analysis of existing data

\$38,336	\$38,336	\$38,336	\$38,336
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Total Salaries: \$665,228

2) Fringe Benefits:

1.0 FTE Data project manager: manage the new 3 agency data system project

\$17,634	\$17,634	\$17,634	\$17,634
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1.0 FTE Education Specialist data coordinator for MDE data sets

\$11,799	\$11,799	\$11,799	\$11,799
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.5 FTE ITS III: analysis of existing data

\$8,818	\$8,818	\$8,818	\$8,818
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Total Fringe: \$153,004

4) Equipment: None

5) Supplies: None

6) Contractual:

Pilot of MNKEA 2.0 to implement new suite of tools

\$0	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$0
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Vendor to design and conduct analytics for Data Warehouse

\$600,000	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$600,000
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Vendor to develop data management software for Case/Child Information Management software

\$250,000	\$500,000	\$750,000	\$1,000,000
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Through a formal Request for Information (RFI) process, the Department of Education, in coordination with the Department of Human Services, will seek information about automated, real-time, customizable case management software options to offer a complete service cycle from intake to outcome for this purpose in support of continuous improvement. The system will be closely coordinated with the TQRIS database (B3). Information resulting from the RFI will be used to issue a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) to select a vendor to build a new data system that will build on the strengths of existing systems within each agency, while developing a coordinated cross-agency solution. With Early Learning Challenge funding, Minnesota will provide ELD programs serving Children with High Needs with a software solution to manage data and information, beginning in the Early Learning Challenge Target Communities.

Contractual Total: \$5,200,000

8) Other: None

9) Total Direct Costs: \$6,018,232

10) Indirect Costs:

Total Indirect Costs	\$47,748	\$47,748	\$47,748	\$47,748
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Total Indirect Costs: \$190,992

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. None

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance are identified in the lead agency budget (Minnesota Department of Education) and operated under the requirements of the inter-agency memorandum of understanding.

13) Total Funds Requested \$6,209,224

14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: Some of the SLDS federal funding is allocated for linking the MDE based early learning data elements to the data warehouse that is already underway. This work will benefit and inform the development of our ELDS. We conservatively estimate this portion of SLDS to be \$100,000 per year through 2014 for a total of \$300,000.

15) Total Budget: \$6,509,224

**Priority 2: Competitive Priority—Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System**

1) Personnel: Salaries

.5 FTE Education Specialist II-Planning and implementation for expansion of family support and parent education.

	\$25,650	\$0	\$0	\$0
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2) Fringe Benefits:

.5 FTE Education Specialist II	\$5,900	\$0	\$0	\$0
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3)Travel: None

4) Equipment: None

5) Supplies: None

6) Contractual: None

7) Training Stipends: None

8) Other: None

9) Total Direct Costs: \$31,550

10) Indirect Costs: \$6,562

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.

	\$0	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
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12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

13) Total Funds Requested: \$158,112

14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: Minnesota's Educate Parents partnership directly supports this section by providing online universal access to assessment and screening information through MNParentsKnow. This has a state allocation of \$49,000 per year for a total contribution of \$196,000 over the four year period.

15) Total Budget: \$354,112

Project Support Management Activities

3) Travel: Mileage costs for on-site technical assistance to place-based initiatives and participating Title I school districts.

10 trips per year; average 400 miles, .55 per mile; over four years.

\$2200          \$2200          \$2200          \$2200

5) Supplies: Meeting costs, including room rental, materials, etc.

\$2000          \$2000          \$2000          \$2000

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

\$100,000      \$100,000      \$100,000      \$100,000

***Participating State Agency 2: Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, narrative.***

<b><u>Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency</u></b> <b>(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))</b> <b>MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES</b>					
<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
1. Personnel	107,459	384,902	384,902	384,902	<b>1,262,165</b>
2. Fringe Benefits	32,238	115,471	115,471	115,471	<b>378,651</b>
3. Travel	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
4. Equipment	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
5. Supplies	16,770	40,752	56,214	60,475	<b>174,211</b>
6. Contractual	370,000	2,157,698	3,783,265	5,063,748	<b>11,374,711</b>
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
8. Other	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	<b>526,467</b>	<b>2,698,823</b>	<b>4,339,852</b>	<b>5,624,596</b>	<b>13,189,738</b>
10. Indirect Costs*	58,950	196,500	196,500	196,500	<b>648,450</b>

<b>Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency</b> <b>(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))</b> <b>MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES</b>					
<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners	0	0	0	0	0
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	0	0	0	0	0
<b>13. Total Grant Funds Requested</b> (add lines 9-12)	<b>585,417</b>	<b>2,895,323</b>	<b>4,536,352</b>	<b>5,821,096</b>	<b>13,838,188</b>
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	6,115,457	6,355,000	5,855,000	5,855,000	<b>24,180,457</b>
<b>15. Total Statewide Budget</b> (add lines 13-14)	<b>6,700,874</b>	<b>9,250,323</b>	<b>10,391,352</b>	<b>11,676,096</b>	<b>38,018,645</b>

<b>Participating State Agency-Level Budget Table II-2</b> <b>(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))</b> <b>MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES: BUDGET BY PROJECT</b>					
<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
<b>B1, 2, 3 &amp; 5 Parent Aware TQRIS</b>	4,460,457	5,635,406	6,766,435	8,141,179	<b>25,003,477</b>
<b>B4 Access: School Readiness Scholarships</b>	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>

<b>Participating State Agency-Level Budget Table II-2</b> (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <b>MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES: BUDGET BY PROJECT</b>					
<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
<b>B4 Access: Title I Match Grants</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>C1 Standards</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>C2 Comprehensive Assessment</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>D1 Workforce Framework</b>	50,000	90,000	50,000	50,000	240,000
<b>D2 Workforce Support</b>	1,975,000	3,315,000	3,365,000	3,275,000	11,930,000
<b>E1 Kindergarten Entry</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>E2 Data System</b>	215,417	209,917	209,917	209,917	845,168
<b>P2 FFN Support</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>P5 Public-Private Partnerships</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Project Support Mangement Activities</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Funds Set Aside for TA</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Statewide Budget</b>	<b>6,700,874</b>	<b>9,250,323</b>	<b>10,391,352</b>	<b>11,676,096</b>	<b>38,018,645</b>

**BUDGET PART II – NARRATIVE****Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)**Year 1Year 2Year 3Year 4

**B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs (B1, 2, 3 & 5): Parent Aware Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System**

1) Personnel

DHS Lead staff (Social Services Program Consultant) position will provide policy and administrative leadership for the project, and will oversee the work of the raters.

1 FTE (delayed start)	\$0*	\$63,580	\$63,580	\$63,580
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DHS Rater (Social Services Program Advisor) position will act as the “anchor” Quality Rater, working with the lead staff person and the department leadership to help to establish updates to policies and procedures, and as they are established the ratings of the other contracted raters will be tested to determine reliability with the anchor.

1 FTE each year	\$0*	\$59,195	\$59,195	\$59,195
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DHS Database programmer (Information Technology Specialist 3) position will provide programming for databases housed within state government that are used by or linked to the TQRIS.

0.5 FTE each year	\$0*	\$39,202	\$39,202	\$39,202
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Data Project Manager (Information Systems Applications Manager) position will provide management of all aspects of the systems development work, including overseeing the work of the subcontracted database developers.

1 FTE (delayed start)	\$0*	\$115,466	\$115,466	\$115,466
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Total Personnel	\$0*	\$277,443	\$277,443	\$277,443
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\* Adjusted in first year due to contribution of other funding sources

2) Fringe Benefits

All fringe benefits for the personnel described above are calculated at 30% based on instructions from the Minnesota Management and Budget agency for DHS cost estimates.

	\$0	\$83,233	\$83,233	\$83,233
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3) Travel: None

4) Equipment:	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
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5) Supplies:	\$0	\$29,483	\$44,945	\$49,205
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6) Contractual

All contractual instruments will be governed by and implemented according to federal and state procurement procedures, including 34 CFS Parts 74.40-74.48 and Part 80.36.

**(B)(2) TQRIS Program Participation for All Publicly-Funded Early Learning and Development Programs**

Contracts to CCR&R agencies to provide recruitment and supports to participating programs and support the Parent Aware website

\$0	\$0	\$1,139,300	\$2,303,700
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**(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs**

Contracts for additional quality raters and to the observation organization

\$0	\$407,698	\$883,965	\$1,090,048
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**(B)(5) Validating the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System**

Contracts for Evaluation

<u>\$50,000</u>	<u>\$50,000</u>	<u>\$50,000</u>	<u>\$50,000</u>
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Contracts subtotal:	\$50,000	\$457,698	\$2,073,265	\$3,443,748
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7) Training Stipends: None

8) Other: None

9) Total Direct Costs	\$50,000	\$847,856	\$2,478,885	\$3,853,629
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10) Indirect Costs

DHS operates under a federally approved cost allocation plan as required by federal regulations contained in 45CFR 95 Subpart E which establishes requirements for the preparation, submission and approval of a State agency cost allocation plan for public assistance programs. This plan is prepared in accordance with OMB Circular A-87 and submitted for approval to the Division of Cost Allocation (DCA), Department of Health & Human Services. All DHS administrative costs, both direct and indirect, are allocated to benefiting programs/grants following the methodology contained in this plan. The current plan was approved by the DCA in a letter dated May 20, 2011. The current approved plan methodology was applied to the DHS positions identified above under "Personnel."

\$0	\$137,550	\$137,550	\$137,550
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11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.



No federal RTT-ELC funds will be distributed from DHS except under those activities identified above under “Contractual.”

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance are identified in the lead agency budget (Minnesota Department of Education) and operated under the requirements of the inter-agency memorandum of understanding.

13) Total Funds Requested                      \$50,000                      \$985,406                      \$2,616,435                      \$3,991,179

14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan

CCDF Quality Set-Aside and Targeted Funds will be re-directed for the following activities:

**(B)(2) TQRIS Program Participation for All Publicly-Funded Early Learning and**

**Development Programs:** The CCR&R system, the Minnesota Tribal Resources for Early Childhood and Care, and the coordinating CCR&R entity (Minnesota CCR&R Network) will be contracted to support the TQRIS to carry out the following: Train and coordinate the TQRIS Quality Coaches housed at the CCR&R agencies; support the Building Quality process; provide quality improvement supports; continue the Parent Aware website; update brochures and parent referral and education materials; and provide phone consultation to parents searching for child care.

Contracts to CCR&R agencies to provide recruitment and supports to participating programs and support the Parent Aware website using CCDF Quality Set-Aside funds

\$1,045,000      \$2,052,700      \$2,500,000      \$2,500,000

**(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs:** An observation organization will be supported with CCDF Quality Set-Aside funds, supplemented by RTT funds, to provide quality assurance monitoring for the TQRIS; collaboratively train the Quality Coaches, in coordination with the CCR&R coordinating entity; and provide observations needed in the rating process.

Contracts for additional quality raters and to the observation organization using CCDF Quality Set-Aside funds                      \$1,215,457      \$447,300      \$0      \$0

Private funder support for these activities include (for more detail, see Priority 5 narrative:

The Greater Twin Cities United Way (GTCUW) will direct private funds to ensure that its investments in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area supplement the Accreditation Facilitation Project and the Building Quality process and are aligned closely with the Parent Aware program. GTCUW will also provide support for the TQRIS evaluation.

Parent Aware for School Readiness (PASR) is a private, nonprofit organization focused on using private sector strategies to improve school readiness in Minnesota. PASR will raise and direct funding from the private sector to continue ad campaigns promoting the TQRIS, continue the business developed website [www.IsYourChildReady.com](http://www.IsYourChildReady.com) to help parents track their children's readiness for school, and supplement funding for the TQRIS evaluation.

**(B)(2) TQRIS Program Participation for All Publicly-Funded Early Learning /Develop Programs**

Contracts for CCR&R Parent Aware funded from Private Funders

\$1,250,000	\$1,250,000	\$750,000	\$750,000
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**(B)(3)(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents**

Contracts for Marketing funded from Private Funders

\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
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**(B)(5) Validating the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System**

Contracts for Evaluation funded from Private Funders

	<u>\$400,000</u>	<u>\$400,000</u>	<u>\$400,000</u>	<u>\$400,000</u>
Other funds subtotal:	\$4,410,457	\$4,650,000	\$4,150,000	\$4,150,000
15) Total Budget	\$4,460,457	\$5,635,406	\$6,766,435	\$8,141,179

**D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce**

- 1) Personnel: None
- 2) Fringe Benefits: None
- 3) Travel: None

4) Equipment: None

5) Supplies: None

6) Contractual

All contractual instruments will be governed by and implemented according to federal and state procurement procedures, including 34 CFS Parts 74.40-74.48 and Part 80.36.

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

\$40,000 in 2nd year for professional/technical contract for development of two core competency companion guides

\$0	\$40,000	\$0	\$0
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**(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators: Workforce Support:**

Contracts through DHS with MN CCR&R Network for:

Free QRIS training for Early Childhood Educators enrolled in Building Quality and Parent Aware

\$50,000	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$850,000
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Higher Education scholarships for Early Childhood Educators

\$0	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$400,000
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Low cost training for MNCCC

\$0	\$135,000	\$135,000	\$135,000
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Contracts through DHS with other entities for:

Coaching on serving children with special needs

\$110,000	\$160,000	\$210,000	\$210,000
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Development of career guidance website

\$85,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
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Increased capacity to process Professional Development Registry

\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$0
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Registry technology improvements and linkage to State Training and Registry System

\$0	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$0
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Reporting on Workforce Support progress

\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
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D2 Contract subtotal:	\$320,000	\$1,660,000	\$1,710,000	\$1,620,000
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7) Training Stipends: None

8) Other: None

9) Total Direct Costs	\$320,000	\$1,700,000	\$1,710,000	\$1,620,000
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10) Indirect Costs: None for this section

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.

No federal RTT-ELC funds will be distributed from DHS except under those activities identified above under "Contractual".

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance are identified in the lead agency budget (Minnesota Department of Education) and operated under the requirements of the inter-agency memorandum of understanding.

13) Total Funds Requested	\$320,000	\$1,700,000	\$1,710,000	\$1,620,000
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14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan:

CCDF Quality Set-Aside and Targeted Funds will be directed to the following activities in support of the State Plan:

**(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and Progression of Credentials**

Grant contract funding for the Minnesota Center for Professional Development will include support for making needed changes to the Minnesota Professional Development Registry and Career Lattice as a result of activities in the State Plan.

\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
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**(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in Improving Their Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:**

Grant contracts with the Minnesota Center for Professional Development, CCR&R system agencies, Minnesota Tribal Resources for Early Childhood and Care, the Early Childhood Resource and Training Center, the Center for Inclusive Child Care, and the Center for Early

Education and Development at the University of Minnesota will include support for all necessary revision, alignment and delivery of programs and services in support of the activities in the State Plan. These programs and services include the Minnesota Child Care Credential; the statewide training and trainer approval system; TEACH and the Child Development Associate Credential scholarship programs; other training, technical assistance and coaching; and the Minnesota Professional Development Registry.

	\$1,655,000	\$1,655,000	\$1,655,000	\$1,655,000
15) Total Budget				
Subtotal for D1:	\$50,000	\$90,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Subtotal for D2:	<u>\$1,975,000</u>	<u>\$3,315,000</u>	<u>\$3,365,000</u>	<u>\$3,275,000</u>
	\$2,025,000	\$3,405,000	\$3,415,000	\$3,325,000

## E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

### (E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system

#### 1) Personnel:

DHS Systems Management (Information Technology Specialist 3) position will work on the programming and other software development tasks for including DHS early childhood data in the early learning system data warehouse.

0.5 FTE	\$39,202	\$39,202	\$39,202	\$39,202
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DHS Systems Business Analyst (State Program Administration Principal) position will coordinate with the business analysts at the partner agencies to ensure the data system architecture aligns with DHS data systems and will coordinate obtaining data from DHS data systems, define data transfer protocols and formats, as well as set and drive timelines so that DHS data can be effectively transferred and linked in the data warehouse.

1.0 FTE	<u>\$68,257</u>	<u>\$68,257</u>	<u>\$68,257</u>	<u>\$68,257</u>
Total Personnel	\$107,459	\$107,459	\$107,459	\$107,459

#### 2) Fringe Benefits:

All fringe benefits for the personnel described above are calculated at 30% based on instructions from the Minnesota Management and Budget agency for DHS cost estimates.

	\$32,238	\$32,238	\$32,238	\$32,238
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3) Travel: None				
4) Equipment: None				
5) Supplies:	\$16,770	\$11,270	\$11,270	\$11,270
6) Contractual: None				
7) Training Stipends: None				
8) Other: None				
9) Total Direct Costs	\$156,467	\$150,967	\$150,967	\$150,967
10) Indirect Costs:				

DHS operates under a federally approved cost allocation plan as required by federal regulations contained in 45CFR 95 Subpart E which establishes requirements for the preparation, submission and approval of a State agency cost allocation plan for public assistance programs. This plan is prepared in accordance with OMB Circular A-87 and submitted for approval to the Division of Cost Allocation (DCA), Department of Health & Human Services. All DHS administrative costs, both direct and indirect, are allocated to benefiting programs/grants following the methodology contained in this plan. The current plan was approved by the DCA in a letter dated May 20, 2011. The current approved plan methodology was applied to the DHS positions identified above under "Personnel." \$58,950 \$58,950 \$58,950 \$58,950

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. None

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance

Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance are identified in the lead agency budget (Minnesota Department of Education) and operated under the requirements of the inter-agency memorandum of understanding.

13) Total Funds Requested	\$215,417	\$209,917	\$209,917	\$209,917
14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: None				
15) Total Budget	\$215,417	\$209,917	\$209,917	\$209,917

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### DHS Agency Budget across Projects

Total Grant Funds Requested:	\$585,417	\$2,895,323	\$4,536,352	\$5,821,096
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Funds from other sources:	\$6,115,457	\$6,355,000	\$5,855,000	\$5,855,000
Total Statewide Budget:	\$6,700,874	\$9,250,323	\$10,391,352	\$11,676,096

***Participating State Agency 3: Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, narrative.***

<b>Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH</b>					
<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
1. Personnel	178,244	178,244	97,125	97,125	<b>550,738</b>
2. Fringe Benefits	56,682	56,682	30,886	30,886	<b>175,136</b>
3. Travel	8,000	6,000	0	0	<b>14,000</b>
4. Equipment	3,800	0	0	0	<b>3,800</b>
5. Supplies	6,250	6,250	3,750	3,750	<b>20,000</b>
6. Contractual	16,500	16,500	0	0	<b>33,000</b>
7. Training Stipends	1,000	0	0	0	<b>1,000</b>
8. Other	3,183	3,183	2,122	2,122	<b>10,610</b>
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	<b>273,659</b>	<b>266,859</b>	<b>133,883</b>	<b>133,883</b>	<b>808,284</b>
10. Indirect Costs*	65,404	63,778	31,998	31,998	<b>193,178</b>
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>

<b>Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH</b>					
<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
<b>13. Total Grant Funds Requested</b> (add lines 9-12)	339,063	330,637	165,881	165,881	1,001,462
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	470,000	470,000	470,000	0	1,410,000
<b>15. Total Statewide Budget</b> (add lines 13-14)	809,063	800,637	635,881	165,881	2,411,462

<b>Participating State Agency-Level Budget Table II-2 (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES: BUDGET BY PROJECT</b>					
<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grant Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
<b>B1, 2, 3 &amp; 5 Parent Aware TQRIS</b>	170,456	164,756	0	0	335,212
<b>B4 Access: School Readiness Scholarships</b>	470,000	470,000	470,000	0	1,410,000
<b>B4 Access: Title I Match Grants</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>C1 Standards</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>C2 Comprehensive Assessment</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>D1 Workforce Framework</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>D2 Workforce Support</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>E1 Kindergarten Entry</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>E2 Data System</b>	168,607	165,881	165,881	165,881	666,250



<b>Participating State Agency-Level Budget Table II-2</b> (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) <b>MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES: BUDGET BY PROJECT</b>					
<b>Project</b>	<b>Grant Year 1 (a)</b>	<b>Grnat Year 2 (b)</b>	<b>Grant Year 3 (c)</b>	<b>Grant Year 4 (d)</b>	<b>Total (e)</b>
<b>P2 FFN Support</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>P5 Public-Private Partnerships</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Project Support Mangement Activities</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Funds Set Aside for TA</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Statewide Budget</b>	<b>809,063</b>	<b>800,637</b>	<b>635,881</b>	<b>165,881</b>	<b>2,411,462</b>

**BUDGET PART II – NARRATIVE**

**Minnesota Department of Health**

Year 1      Year 2      Year 3      Year 4

**B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs (B1, 2, 3 & 5): Parent Aware Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System**

1) Personnel:

MDH Child Care Health Consultant (Public Health Nurse Advisor Sr.) position will provide training/technical assistance and administrative leadership for building the infrastructure of the CCHC network, and will oversee the work of the contracted health consultants.

1.0 FTE	\$81,119	\$81,119	\$0	\$0
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All fringe benefits for the personnel described above are calculated at 31.8% based on instructions from the Minnesota Management and Budget agency for MDH cost estimates.

	\$ 25,796	\$ 25,796	\$0	\$0
3) Travel:	\$ 8,000	\$ 6,000		
4) Equipment (computer):	\$ 1,600			
5) Supplies:	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,500		
6) Contracts:	\$ 16,500	\$ 16,500		
Contracts to three regional (White Earth, Minneapolis, St Paul, and Itasca county) to provide training /technical assistance to early care and education settings/providers.				
7) Training Stipends:	\$ 1,000			
Training Cost for the State Child Care Health Consultant to attend national train the trainer CCHC training in North Carolina.				
8) Other (IT support fee):	\$ 1,061	\$ 1,061		
9) Total Direct Costs:	\$137,576	\$132,976	\$0	\$0
10) Indirect Costs (23.9%):	\$ 32,880	\$ 31,780	\$0	\$0
11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws: None				
12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance: None				
13) Total Funds Requested:	\$170,456	\$164,756	\$0	\$0

14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: None

15) Total Budget:	\$640,456	\$634,756	\$470,000	\$0
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**B. Promoting Access to high-quality ELD Programs for Children with High Needs (B4):**

**School Readiness Scholarships**

14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: Funds for the MIECHV program.

\$470,000	\$470,000	\$470,000	\$0
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MIECHV home visiting funds will be used to support outreach to connect Children with High Needs to high quality ELD Programs in some of the ELC Target Communities.

**E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress**

**(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system**

1) Personnel:

MDH Systems Management (Information Technology Specialist 3) position will work on the programming and other software development tasks for including MDH early childhood data in the early learning system data warehouse.

0.5 FTE	\$34,875	\$34,875	\$34,875	\$34,875
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MDH Systems Business Analyst (State Program Administration Principal) position will coordinate with the business analysts at the partner agencies to ensure the data system architecture aligns with MDH data systems and will coordinate obtaining data from MDH data systems, define data transfer protocols and formats, as well as set and drive timelines so that MDH data can be effectively transferred and linked in the data warehouse.

1.0 FTE	<u>\$62,250</u>	<u>\$62,250</u>	<u>\$62,250</u>	<u>\$62,250</u>
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Total Personnel	\$97,125	\$97,125	\$97,125	\$97,125
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2) Fringe Benefits:

All fringe benefits for the personnel described above are calculated at 31.8% based on instructions from the Minnesota Management and Budget agency for MDH cost estimates.

\$ 30,886	\$ 30,886	\$ 30,886	\$ 30,886
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3) Travel: None

4) Equipment: (Computer)	\$ 2,200			
5) Supplies:	\$ 3,750	\$ 3,750	\$ 3,750	\$ 3,750
6) Contractual: None				
7) Training Stipends: None				
8) Other (IT support fee):	\$ 2,122	\$ 2,122	\$ 2,122	\$ 2,122
9) Total Direct Costs:	\$136,083	\$133,883	\$133,883	\$ 133,883
10) Indirect Costs (23.9%):	\$ 32,524	\$ 31,998	\$ 31,998	\$ 31,998

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. None

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance: None

13) Total Funds Requested	\$168,607	\$165,881	\$165,881	\$165,881
14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan: None				
15) Total Budget	\$168,607	\$165,881	\$165,881	\$165,881

#### **MDH Agency Budget across Projects**

Total Grant Funds Requested:	\$339,063	\$330,637	\$165,881	\$165,881
Funds from Other Sources:	\$470,000	\$470,000	\$470,000	\$0
Total Statewide Budget:	\$959,063	\$800,637	\$635,881	\$165,881

**BUDGET: INDIRECT COST INFORMATION**

To request reimbursement for indirect costs, please answer the following questions:

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	
Does the State have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government?	
YES	<input checked="" type="radio"/> [See narrative below.]
NO	<input type="radio"/>
If yes to question 1, please provide the following information:	
Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (mm/dd/yyyy):	
From: <u>7 / 1 / 2011</u>	To: <u>6/30/2012</u>
Approving Federal agency: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HHS <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
<i>(Please specify agency):</i>	

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES	
Does the State have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government?	
YES	<input checked="" type="radio"/> [See narrative below.]
NO	<input type="radio"/>
If yes to question 1, please provide the following information:	
Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (mm/dd/yyyy):	
From: <u>7 / 1 / 2010</u>	To: <u>Continuous pending any organizational changes or legislative or regulatory changes that would require amendment of the plan.</u>
Approving Federal agency: <input type="checkbox"/> ED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> HHS <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
<i>(Please specify agency):</i> <u>The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) does not have a negotiated indirect cost rate. DHS operates under a federally approved cost allocation plan as required by federal regulations contained in 45CFR 95 Subpart E which establishes requirements for the preparation, submission and approval of a State agency cost allocation plan for public assistance programs. This plan is prepared in</u>	

accordance with OMB Circular A-87 and submitted for approval to the Division of Cost Allocation (DCA), Department of Health & Human Services. All DHS administrative costs, both direct and indirect, are allocated to benefiting programs/grants following the methodology contained in this plan. The current plan was approved by the DCA in a letter dated May 20, 2011.

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Does the State have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government?

YES  [See narrative below.]  
NO

If yes to question 1, please provide the following information:

Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (mm/dd/yyyy):

From: 7/1/2011 To: 6/30/2012.

Approving Federal agency:  ED  HHS  Other

(Please specify agency): U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Directions for this form:

1. Indicate whether or not the State has an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement that was approved by the Federal government.
2. If “No” is checked, the Departments generally will authorize grantees to use a temporary rate of 10 percent of budgeted salaries and wages subject to the following limitations:
  - (a) The grantee must submit an indirect cost proposal to its cognizant agency within 90 days after the grant award notification is issued; and
  - (b) If after the 90-day period, the grantee has not submitted an indirect cost proposal to its cognizant agency, the grantee may not charge its grant for indirect costs until it has negotiated an indirect cost rate agreement with its cognizant agency.

If “Yes” is checked, indicate the beginning and ending dates covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. In addition, indicate whether ED, HHS, or another Federal agency (Other) issued the approved agreement. If “Other” was checked, specify the name of the agency that issued the approved agreement.