



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # OK-5029

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
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Application Status: **Reviewed**
Date/Time: **11/17/2011 - 7:45 AM**

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

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

A. Successful State Systems

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development	20	15
<p>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--</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;</p> <p>(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and</p> <p>(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.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comment on (A)(1)

Oklahoma has a long list of funding sources for their Early Learning and Development Programs (ELDPs). Many of these funding sources are from private sources, demonstrating not only a commitment by the state to support and improve services for children birth to five, but also the community supports such services and improvement as well. While Oklahoma demonstrates an overall increase in state funding from 2007 to 2011 by 13.6% they also show evidence of an overall decline in funding since 2008 when the economic downturn began (decreases in Head Start and Early Head Start, Part C contributions, TANF spending, Children First (home visiting (hv)), Oklahoma Parents (hv), and Office of Child Abuse Prevention (hv)). There has also been some decrease in enrollment of Children with High Needs within a couple of programs over the year as well (decrease in CCDF programs, Children First (hv)). This leaves several programs that have seen enrollment increase (state funded preschool, Early Head Start and Head Start, Part C programs, Title I programs), while funding has continued to decrease. The greatest increase of Children with High Needs seen in the state since 2007 is the amount of children living below the poverty level - they have seen a 4.6% increase and it now stands at 21%. Oklahoma states that since 2008, all programs in the state had reductions in budgets and ELDPs were not singled out. Many private companies and business professionals have contributed funds in order to help the state continue to meet the needs of children birth to five. While Oklahoma demonstrates a clear commitment to provide services for children birth to five (as seen in the long list of different programs, specifically home visiting programs), they are also clearly struggling to meet the needs of the growing population of children birth to five through adequate funding and have demonstrated that they can solicit and secure funds from private and business sources to help make up for the difference. Oklahoma has a large pool of ELD legislation, policies and practices to cover all the areas of early childhood education. For example, They have a universal pre-K program for 4 year olds in 98% of school districts, their child care subsidy program is ranked third in the nation, their Parent Education Program supports their Oklahoma Parents as Teachers program which provides home visitation services, they have the Child Guidance Program that provides screening, assessment and parenting training services to all families regardless of income, they have a state statute that designated the Sooner Start program which serves families with children birth to three who have children identified with developmental delays/disabilities. All of these policies and practices

comprehensively cover all their ELDPs except for services regarding children who reside on Indian Lands which they do not discuss. However, they provide documentation that 52% of all children in the birth to five range are children who reside on Indian Lands. They do not provide an explanation as to why there are no policies or practices in place for this highest group of Children with High Needs. Oklahoma provides documentation that they currently have in place Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), health promotion practices and family engagement strategies and practices which help to improve the education and training of their Early Childhood Educators (ECEs). They do not have in place a Comprehensive Assessment System or a Kindergarten Entry Assessment or a unified effective data system. The state appropriately acknowledges their strengths and weakness and provides an initial and brief outline of their reform plan to fill in the current gaps that is clearly ambitious and appears logical. Based on the evidence and information provided and the above comments, this is a medium/high-quality plan.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)

Oklahoma provides two overarching goals for their state reform plan: 1) to ensure that all children enter Kindergarten ready to succeed and 2) increase the number of Children with High Needs who have access to programs that support Kindergarten readiness. These are ambitious goals, yet they are quite vague and difficult to measure as to whether or not they are sufficiently or effectively successful. Essentially, to achieve #1 they would have 100% of children achieve a passing rate on the Kindergarten Entry Assessment or only increase by a few children to achieve goal #2. The state does later specify that they want to increase from 128 3-star child-care programs to 1580 in 3, 4, and 5-star rated programs. But this implies that they are only going to focus on children primarily in the birth to three range or in before and after-care programs. The state provides a brief summary regarding their state reform plan. Everything within their new plan hinges on the the new Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) that they plan to develop during the beginning stages of the grant and then later implement and evaluate. This will lead to an overall system which provides expectations for providers, along with supports and incentives to help them improve and achieve higher quality programs. Within their summary, the state does not provide any detailed information regarding how they will address the specific and unique needs of Children with High Needs (e.g. within the assessment process or within the training of their ECE professionals). In order to make all the appropriate additions and changes to their current system and achieve their goals, the state provides a rationale for selecting all of the focused interest areas (FIAs). The state explains that these FIAs address all their current areas of need and thus in order to achieve an overall high-quality early learning and development system they need to focus on all of them - revising their ELDS to align with their K-12 standards, developing a Comprehensive Assessment System, creating a Kindergarten Assessment System, providing comprehensive services to address young children's health, behavior and development, improve their family engagement strategies, improve their ECE workforce by improving their credentialing and professional development systems, and created a unified statewide data system. While it may seem logical to address all the FIAs because they believe that they are currently lacking in all the areas that are focused on, it does not appear that the state has taken the time to analyze the amount of time and money needed to effectively address all these areas. Due to the lack of detail in their overall plan, it appears that they are trying to achieve too much within the 4-year grant period. Given the fact that they are already struggling to continue to financially support the current programs, the state seems to have not prioritized their needs, their funding and their abilities to truly address their greatest areas of need given the amount of money provided. Based on the evidence and information provided and the above comments, this is a medium-quality plan.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	6

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (A)(3)

The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) will be the lead agency for this grant. The state explains that a governance structure to implement the grant will be established. This structure will include 1) an ELC Steering Committee made up of the Early Learning agency heads and a few governor appointees, 2) the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) which is also the State Early Childhood Advisory Council to convene agency representative and other stakeholders to ensure work under the grant stays aligned to the early learning objectives of the state, and 3) a special Data Governance Committee to help coordinate the new data system(s). The participating agencies are listed as the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS), the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) and the Department of Commerce (DC). The organizational charts for the grant regarding the agencies, as well as the how the goals relate to one another do not appropriately organize and explain the chain of command, how the OSDE operates as the lead agency within the structure, nor how decisions are made. It appears that a new governance structure is being put in place specifically to implement this grant. The two different charts also contain different agencies (i.e. one contains Department of Commerce and the other does not) and the narrative does not contain explanations regarding these differences. Also, there are roles and responsibilities that help to explain what the different agencies or organizations are going to do to implement the state reform plan that appear logical, but the overall picture of the relationships still ends up being confusing. It is apparent that OK needs to more clearly think through how their organization structure works or how they depict that it works. The agencies that are involved in implementing the grant, specifically the OPSR, contain a comprehensive set of stakeholders as a part of its typical operating procedures and policy development process (i.e. parents, educators, representatives of different ELDPs). This indicates that the agency values the input of the stakeholders and such ongoing method of operation also means that these stakeholders were involved in the development of this state reform plan. The state provides an organized and

comprehensive overall scope-of-work description for each Participating Agency that correlates logically with the responsibilities of the agencies and the different projects listed in the state reform plan. These agencies also all sign a MOU committing to the work they have outlined. The terms and conditions reflect a strong commitment on the part of all the agencies to the State Plan. The state includes a long list of early learning intermediary organizations and local early learning councils, including the three tribal nations within the state. Every organization and council listed has included a letter with intent to support the work of the grant should it be awarded to the state. Based on the evidence provided and the above statements, this plan is partially-implemented and medium-quality.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	8

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(4)

Oklahoma demonstrates a clear commitment to financially supporting their early childhood programs – through the state funds, as well as private and business contributions. Even as the state has had to gradually decreased funding to all programs since 2008, private and business contributions have sought to increase their funding to maintain a the level of quality needed to provide services to children birth to five. They also provide documentation that over the next four years, through four different sources (SDE, CCDF, OSDH and OPSR – ARRA), an allocation of almost 7 million dollars of existing funds other funds to be used to achieve the outcomes of the State Plan. Oklahoma divides their State Plan up into seven different projects in which they intend to expand and build on already existing services or practices and to fill in service gaps to comprehensively serve children birth to five. The state outlines how the funds are distributed to each participating agency and also in accordance to each project. The monies allocated for personnel, fringe benefits, travel, technical assistance, and funds to be distributed to localities are all clearly explained. However, the state does not provide clear explanations, and on many instances (across the four budgets for OSDE, OKDHS, OSDH and OPSR) omits any mention of, the exorbitant amount of money allocated for the following: 1) OSDE: equipment, supplies, and contractual obligations equaling \$22838,454; 63% of their budget, 2) OKDHS: supplies and "other" equaling \$8,453,960; 63% of their budget, 3) OSDH: supplies and "other" equaling \$5,092,640; 78% of their budget, and 4) OPSR: "other" equaling \$2,475,000; 69% of their budget. While these categories are by nature catch-all/miscellaneous funds, and difficult to fully flesh out as to exact costs, explanations are still needed as to what the money will be spent on, especially when the allocated amount is so high (i.e. how is it that a contract with one person "to review... and provide recommendations regarding..." requires \$450,000 a year. Or, why is there \$990 a year allocated for general supplies but no explanation for the other \$3,000,000 requested within this same category? Or, how is \$2,550,000 needed (within the "other" category) for training for educators and parents over four years, when none of it is allocated as training stipends or credentialing programs)? Due to the high percentage that these costs end up being (majority percentages) within each agency's budget, and how much more the percentage is than those which are designated for local implementation, the state has not provided adequate or satisfactory explanations for the use of, or justified the state's need for, these funds. The state explains that they have no way of estimating how or what they will sustain from the work of the grant in four years, but they state that they have purposely focused their budget on building capacity so that when the grant ends, not much money will be needed to maintain what has been created and is now in place. They also state that using this grant money will enable them to unify and streamline many systems that will result in money savings (eliminating duplication of work) and provide them with funds to allocate toward the work that needs to continue after the grant is finished. This is a logical explanation, but the state could still have put the effort toward estimating (based on past budgets) what they will be able to fund and where they will take money from the savings they say they will have incurred. Based on the evidence and information provided and the above comments, this is a medium-quality plan.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	5
<p>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--</p> <p>(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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; <p>(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 that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and</p> <p>(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)		
<p>Oklahoma has the oldest QRIS within the nation. While there are many strengths to the system, it is based more on a checklist of items present or not present and not on the quality of implementation of standards and practices. They currently have an up-to-date set of Early Learning Guidelines for Infants, Toddlers and Twos, and for Ages Three through Five. These guidelines are aligned with the Priority Academic Skill Standards which define what children are expected to know in Kindergarten. While these have been implemented within the ELDPs, they have not been incorporated within the state's QRIS. The state plans to embed these guidelines in all the tiers of the new QRIS while requiring, that at the lowest level, all staff and directors are appropriately trained on the early learning guidelines. The state currently does not utilize a Comprehensive Assessment System. Every three years they utilize the ERS to measure features of the learning environment within each ELDPs and they use the results to develop a quality improvement plan with achievable goals. The state indicates that in the future the QRIS will require child assessment and screening and the tiers will rate how extensively they implement assessment and how well they use the results. The current QRIS also has the requirement within the top two tiers that programs have a master teacher for every 30 children for the first year and every 20 every year after. There are currently different requirements for their pre-K system which require a bachelor's degree and specialized early childhood training. The state acknowledges the need to revise the ECE credentials and degrees so that they align with the early learning guidelines and program standards. New credentials and degrees will be linked directly to the tiers in the QRIS. Oklahoma has many family engagement practices in place within their QRIS, but mostly focus on promoting communication and awareness and how many of such strategies they utilize. The state plans to add home visitation and a dedicated family support staff person to their level of tiers to improve the quality of their family engagement systems. At this point the QRIS requires all ELDPs to meet licensing requirements regarding the basic health and safety guidelines at tier one. They propose to add professional development and consultation for ECEs to help them understand how to help families promote healthy lifestyles. This training will be part of the new tiered QRIS. Finally, with the current QRIS, programs must demonstrate the use of data to improve the quality and personalization of their services. They are not part of a unified system and not monitored by the state. The state plans to add a statewide early childhood data system that all ELDPs will be a part of. Within this criterion the state only provides what they currently have in place for their current QRIS, along with a few sentences regarding overarching ideas for their new QRIS plan. They do not provide new standards for their QRIS or how many tiers will be utilized. The state provides a plan for how they will hire a consultant to research and develop their new plan for the QRIS. They plan for the new QRIS to begin implementation in February of 2013. Given the fact that the state has been implementing a QRIS since 2000, it would seem that they would have a lot of information available to them to utilize within this state reform plan and could start with a QRIS (tiers and standards) proposal that then they would later evaluate. The state currently requires state licensing in order to operate as an ELDP within the state. This will continue to be true when the new QRIS and standards are implemented through this grant. Based on the evidence and information provided and the above comments, this is a partially-implemented medium-quality plan.</p>		

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	6

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).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(2)

Currently the state has requirements that all licensed child care centers and home care providers and all ELDPs receiving CCDF funds must participate in the QRIS. Currently 96% of the 2,621 CCDF funded programs participate and half are in the top two (out of four) tiers. There are a few Head Start and State Pilot Early Childhood programs that also participate in the QRIS. Currently no school-based ELDPs participate in the QRIS. The state proposes a plan for participation where 100% of state-funded preschools, programs funded under Title I of ESEA, and State Pilot programs will participate in the new QRIS and 75% of all the Tribal CCDF programs and Head Start and Early Start programs will participate. They plan to complete analyses of the programs that are not participating and develop a workgroup that will devise a plan that will align all ELDPs and make the QRIS applicable to all programs. They will work with people from these programs in order to develop methods for promoting and providing incentive for programs to participate. The new QRIS will become a required system (not voluntary participation) by the end of 2014 (at this point the lowest 67% of preschools will be required to participate). The state has proposes to work with the non-participating programs in order to enlist their participation, but traditionally programs that do not receive subsidy reimbursement are allowed to participate in a QRIS on a voluntary basis. Beyond the fact that the state will provide monetary incentives, the state lacks a detailed plan as to how they will agreement from the other programs to participate, specifically Head Start and Early Head Start, which are federally funded and regulated programs. Currently, OK has a strong subsidy program under the CCDF. Families up to 85% of the median income are eligible for the program. Co-payments are based on a sliding scale rather than on the cost of child care. OK has no waiting list for subsidies and serves all that are eligible. The state currently does not have a plan for how they will improve or implement effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care. They propose to use funds from the grant to investigate ways of revising the subsidy structure and reviewing policies and practices in child care, Head Start, and Pre-K in order to identify and remove barriers to program participation for Children with High Needs. For this sub-criterion, the state does not propose any plan, but a proposal to develop a plan. This will require a considerable amount of valuable time during the grant that could have been spent in preparation for the grant. Based on the evidence provided and the above statements, this is a partially-implemented and medium-quality.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	8

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

Oklahoma currently has a #1 rated (by NACCRRA) monitoring system in place for their child care program. They plan to use this tool to create a cross program rating and monitoring system. They will hire a private consultant to review and assess the new QRIS over a three year period in order to validate the new tool and then provide the state with the plan for using it on an annual basis. They anticipate it utilizing onsite observations through random sampling in local program sites. It is appropriate that an outside consultant is assisting with the monitoring tool, but no justification as to why three years is needed to evaluate the tool is provided, especially if they already have the experience of utilizing such a high-quality tool and process in the past. Oklahoma plans to train all monitors (staff from all ELDPs) "to an acceptable inter-rater reliability level" and to rate programs on an aggressive schedule of three visits a year (currently performed in their QRIS) to ensure they meet the requirements of their assigned tier. The ERS will be used (as is now) on a random selection process to determine which classrooms to monitor. Monitors will be trained to be able to monitor all ELDPs and not just those from which they originated and they will go through a period of pilot testing the monitoring process. Implementing three monitoring visits a year is admirable, but the state does not justify why such a high-frequency schedule is needed to ensure that states are maintaining their assigned tier rating. This amount of work requires a lot of staff and when they have doubled the amount of ELDPs participating in the QRIS (as they have proposed to do), it will be harder to keep up such a rigorous schedule of monitoring. The state does not discuss what monitoring tools they plan to use or what they will be monitoring within the programs as they rate differences among tiers. The state proposes to develop a P20 Education Data System which will be a unified data system for all ELDPs. It will have a P20 Education Data Portal for all stakeholders to offer a single entry point to find quality rating information and make comparisons across programs regarding locations, licensing history and any health and safety violations. Parents will be able to access this portal through a website designed specifically for them. The easy-to-use and easy-to-read method by which the information is organized and published within this system will be designed by the Data System & Coordination Committee who will solicit feedback from the public. The state has addressed the most important aspect of having a unified data system - so that parents can obtain accurate and comprehensive information about ELDPs and make informed decisions regarding where to enroll their child(ren). Based on the evidence and information provided and the above statements, this plan is partially-implemented and medium-quality.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	8

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

Currently, OK has a high subsidy reimbursement rate for children with low-income to attend child care facilities funded through CCDF. All these programs participate in the current QRIS. In 2001, the state funded an independent review of its QRIS to measure the quality of care provided in the child care facilities studied. Quality care was found to be strongly influenced by licensing regulations and QRIS criteria. Environmental rating scores were found to be significantly higher in the top two tiers than in the two bottom tiers. Also, currently 94% of Children with High Needs that are in subsidized care are in programs that are in the top two tiers. The state wants to expand this level of quality to the Children with High Needs enrolled in state-funded preschools. This foundation of experience and information from an independent study sets the state ahead in its work toward implementing a new QRIS and incentive system for participation and improvement. Based on the results from the study conducted to obtain information to establish the new QRIS (B(2)), the state proposes to then develop a menu of supports and incentives that will suit the different programs in different settings. They plan to review the success and limitations of their prior incentive programs and then identify a menu of specific improvements to be accomplished through incentives, estimated fixed and variable costs necessary to achieve each improvement on the menu and a contract that links incentives with results and rewards. Incentives will focus on equipment, curriculum and learning materials (they will be different for each program based on their program type, classroom location, current needs, etc.) Using Challenge Grant funds, they will provide on-time bonus payments to create an incentive for programs to join QRIS and improve to higher levels. They will also create an ongoing bonus program to reward programs for achieving a higher tier. The formula for the ongoing bonus will be based on the number of Children with High Needs served and other factors as appropriate. They will develop contracts with existing

agencies to provide technical assistance to programs to assist with raising their tier rating. By June 2014, they will implement the incentives and supports and then in June 2015 they will evaluate the results to ensure that the system is cost-effectiveness and that they have targeted resources appropriately to the goal of improving outcomes for high-need children. They also plan to identify other sources or re-allocation of funds in order to sustain the incentive system after the grant period ends. Because the state has a long record of utilizing incentives and has conducted a study on the effectiveness of its QRIS, it does not seem logical that they need to take time during the grant period to re-evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their current incentive system. This could have been done in preparation for the grant application. Overall, it appears that the state will spend too much time at the beginning of the grant evaluating and investigating information that it would seem was already readily available to report and utilize. Oklahoma acknowledges that currently working parents overall in their state are experiencing difficulty with finding enough care for their children - many preschools are only half-day and the amount of cost to send children to more than one care facility (before-care, preschool, after-care) can be too much for families to afford. The state has listed a long list of additional supports and ways that they are going to investigate to try to provide additional supports, specifically to working families with Children with High Needs. Some examples are OSDE will work with current pre-K programs to re-figure their funding possibilities for changing to full-day programs and Oklahoma will attempt to revise its CCDF policies to reduce barriers for funding to be provided to Pre-K and or head Start ELDPs and specifically OKDHS will review its subsidy policies to determine if it can provide co-payment reimbursement for parents of Children with High Needs who attend highly rated ELDPs. While these are all creative and possibly effective methods for providing supports to working families of Children with High Needs, nothing was presented that had actually been investigated nor was actually going to happen. Almost all of these possible methods require a lot of policy changes, some of which involve the federal government and while they are ambitious, they are not necessarily achievable. Again, the state provides ambitious numbers for increasing the amount of programs participating in the higher tiers and the number of Children with High Needs in ELDPs within the top tiers. Without full explanations as what the tiers are in the new system, what the incentives and supports will actually be for programs to participate, and without clearly presented methods for increasing the support provided to enroll more Children with High Needs in high-quality programs there is not sufficient information to say that these goals are achievable. Based on the evidence and information provided and the statements made above, this is a partially-implemented, medium-quality plan.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (B)(5)

Oklahoma was the first to implement a QRIS and one of the first to implement validation studies of their systems. They have also conducted studies on their Pre-K system even though the preschools do not participate in the QRIS system. Both studies provided valuable information to the state regarding relationships between providers' quality ratings and other indicators of quality. (For example, group size, staffing ratios, family engagement, compensation, etc.) They found there was a direct relationship between the higher criteria of the higher tiers equating higher quality care. The State Pilot Program has also implemented validation studies on their ELDPs. They found through both environmental and child assessments that their teachers that had higher education and more training compared to other centers in their same communities resulted in higher scores in all environmental rating scales. And, the children had higher mean scores for language cognition and social/emotional measures. Their Pre-K program has also been evaluated. Children in these programs were found to have higher assessment scores than children who did not attend Pre-K. Oklahoma seeks to utilize this information to develop a more comprehensive and unified evaluation process for their ELDPs. Once they have designed their new QRIS, they intend to hire an independent consultant to evaluate the validity of their QRIS by a cross-sectional and longitudinal evaluation of a sample of ELDPs. They will compare the new QRIS standards and ratings to other research-based measures of quality and determine whether ratings are statistically related to those other measures. The consultant will also evaluate the impact of the QRIS through a longitudinal study that will compare program quality change within ELDPs that receive specific types of support (i.e. technical assistance, professional development, incentives) to improve quality. They will compare these data to parallel data regarding centers which do not receive such supports. Finally, they will revise the QRIS based on the results of this research. The proposed research plan has the potential to provide valid results, specifically because they will use random samples of programs and control for different types of variables. They also have the possibility of obtaining valuable results because they will also be measuring many different important details within each tier (i.e. group size, staff qualifications, collection and use of data, staff compensation, and environment). In order to measure the connection between program quality and child outcomes the state will contract with a consultant to develop a plan to conduct formative assessments on a sample of children currently in a quality rated ELDP. The longitudinal study will measure changes in child outcomes during an entire school year. Information gathered about each child will include demographic information and other relevant variables which may need to be "controlled for". Based on the

changes in each child's assessment, (while controlling for appropriate variables) the state plans to identify relationships between QRIS levels and child outcomes as well as between QRIS levels within program type and child outcomes. The state is being ambitious in setting a goal to obtain such results. If they are successful in obtaining these results, they will truly be efficacious in helping the state to determine how program quality and child outcomes are connected. The fact that the state has already implemented extensive evaluations and measures of validity on current programs indicates that they have a high probability of achieving this goal. The one crucial piece missing from this plan is how they plan to assess the overall component of program quality and the outcomes of Children with High Needs - does a highly rated program also relate to a higher rate of Children with High Needs being ready for Kindergarten. Based on the evidence and information provided and the statements made above, this is a high-quality plan.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each 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

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	15	9
<p>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—</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(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.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(1)

Oklahoma provides documentation that they currently have high quality Early Learning and Development Standards (ELD Standards) which incorporate all of the Essential Domains of School Readiness. These standards are also currently used in all ELDPs. The new QRIS will incorporate these standards. These guidelines have also been aligned across all types of ELDPs (i.e. childcare, Pre-K, Head Start and tribal childcare). Oklahoma has ensured that its ELD Standards are developmentally appropriate across infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Their documents reflect the progressive stages of growth and development along with learning outcomes for children. They also include program planning, appropriate curriculum, and family engagement practices that are matched to the children's stages of development. While the state professes that it takes steps to remind programs to maintain cultural and linguistically appropriate practices, the standards do not contain evidence of specific methods or measures which would indicate what they are. Oklahoma has provided evidence that ELD Standards are aligned with K-3 academic standards including early literacy and mathematics. Oklahoma's learning standards are known as the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) and they include Pre-K as well as K-12. The state has begun the process of revising their K-12 standards in order to improve students' college and career readiness. This will also result in revisions to the state's Early Learning Guidelines, ELD Standards and K-3 standards, to ensure that they will remain in alignment. Oklahoma provides evidence that they have already included their ELD Standards in their Program Standards, their state's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and their professional development activities. Within the new QRIS, it will be required that the curriculum selected and implemented be aligned to the ELD Standards. Trainings provided will ensure that ECEs have appropriate

knowledge and understanding to incorporate curricula and activities aligned with the ELD Standards. Oklahoma will be developing a new Comprehensive Assessment System in alignment with the ELD Standards. Oklahoma indicates that it currently has supports in place which promote understanding of and commitment to the ELD Standards across ELDPs. They currently state that they provide professional development opportunities, various documents, and technical assistance which provide support for ECEs regarding the content and implementation practices of the ELD Standards. However, no evidence is provided regarding the professional development opportunities available to ECEs. The state also provides a document for parents outlining practices which they can employ at home to address the different domains of the ELD Standards, but this is the only evidence or information provided to indicate how they promote understanding to parents regarding the ELD Standards. Oklahoma has, overall, presented sufficient evidence that they currently have a quality in place which uses state-wide ELD Standards that are implemented across ELDPs. However, these standards need further development to include cultural and linguistically appropriate methods and measures for all age groups. Based on the evidence and information provided and the statements made above, this is a partially-implemented, medium-quality plan.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	15	6

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(2)

Currently, Oklahoma does not utilize a Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS). Their proposed CAS will include four kinds of assessments: Screening Measures, Formative Assessments, Measures of Environmental Quality, and Measures of The Quality of Adult-Child Interactions. The first two will be implemented by personnel within the ELDPs and will be required components within the QRIS. The second two will be implemented primarily as part of the quality improvement measures by which programs progress through the tiers of the QRIS. It is the state's purpose to use the tiered QRIS to help connect children with the supports and programs they need while using the CAS to provide actionable information about their outcomes within these programs. Below are examples from the state's plan to create and implement a Comprehensive Assessment System. The process by which the state creates the CAS will be done in conjunction with the Kindergarten Entry Assessment. This process will first pursue a review of current practices and needs. The state will develop two committees (which include representatives from all ELDPs, outside experts and parents) who will independently work through a process of reviewing the current research regarding assessment tools in order to provide a proposal. They will ensure that the new assessment tools align appropriately with the ELD Standards and that the data resulting from the use of these tools can be incorporated into the state's administrative processes. They will design trainings for professionals in the proper use of the assessments, as well as develop a plan to educate parents and the community about the meaning and importance of the assessments. The state department of education will select the best proposal. The state proposes to develop the Early Learning Consortium of Oklahoma (ELCO) to provide leadership, professional development and technical assistance to support early childhood development practices. The ELCO will unify all early childhood professional development and training practices regarding standards assessment, health and development needs, family engagement, etc. The ELCO will also provide all the professional development services to the ELDPs. Examples of training and professional development infrastructure will include: in-person and web-based training modules, a certification process for completing training, web-based technical assistance for ECEs. SoonerStart and Child Guidance Clinicians will also continue to provide support to ECEs in understanding and implementing screenings and assessments. The state proposes to contract with an assessment consultant to provide recommendations regarding alternative assessments and tools designed to support high-needs students in alignment with the ELD Standards. Oklahoma currently participates in the ABCD-III pilot project to assure the developmental screening results of children with high needs are shared between the medical home and potential referral sources such as SoonerStart, Child Guidance, Sooner Success, and Oklahoma Family Network. The state plans to incorporate this tool into their P12 Student Information System. This system is currently being developed to assist in reporting student performance data and outcomes. The ELCO will be responsible for training the ECEs in the child-facing assessments that are part of the CAS. They also mention that they will train educators regarding methods for acting on the results of the assessments. Overall, while the state does not currently have a Comprehensive Assessment System, the evidence provided for this plan to support the effective implementation of a developmentally appropriate CAS indicates that the state has devised plan to work with the ELDPs and other important stake holders to develop assessment systems. However, while there is detailed information to explain the state's plan to implement the a, b, and c priorities of this criterion, there is not specific information to detail the training of ECEs in interpreting and using assessment data to inform and

improve instruction programs and services. There is also not sufficient evidence, other than having a consultant provide recommendations for alternative assessments to support Children with High Needs, that explains how they will actually determine the alignment of the assessment and use of the results to help determine where and how Children with High Needs are served. Based on the evidence and information provided and the statements made above, this is a minimally-implemented, medium-quality plan.

	Available	Score
(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.	15	9

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(3)

Oklahoma provides documentation of health and safety standards and includes them in their licensing requirements and as a part of the requirements for entry into the bottom tier of their QRIS. The state will continue to ensure that its progression of health and safety standards is up to date and kept in alignment with revisions to the QRIS. The new QRIS will expand on their practices to include health and developmental screening and follow-up. They state that they will also include within the tiers methods for promoting physical, social and emotional development. Oklahoma currently has many practices in place to support and train ECEs in ensuring that the health and development needs are being met for Children with High Needs (i.e. Consultation Network that provides onsite childcare consultation on health issues, a state-wide toll-free service, Warmline, for ECEs facilitating resources and information regarding childhood health and development issues). The state proposes a plan to further expand these services to meet the growing needs of professionals serving these high needs populations. The state will continue to include health standards in their ongoing professional development for their ECEs. In 2008, Oklahoma developed the Oklahoma Health Improvement Plan (OHIP) to improve the physical, social and mental well-being of all people in Oklahoma. Recently the state was trained in the Let's Move Childcare initiative due in part to the obesity epidemic among children and adults in Oklahoma. This addresses physical activity, healthy eating habits, and healthy media consumption rates. Both this plan and the initiative will continue to be implemented to address this criterion. Through past and present programs the state has focused on implementing screening measures within well-child checks by physicians to improve the identification of Children with High Needs at younger ages. These services have been supported through the state Medicaid program. The state proposes to expand implementation and use of screening measures within the ELDPs. The state will expand the Reach Out and Read program in Oklahoma County which promotes early literacy and school readiness by making books and reading aloud a standard part of pediatric primary care. They will also continue to support physicians who primarily serve children who are eligible for Medicaid services through screening tools and technical assistance through Child Guidance consultants. The documentation provided by the state demonstrates that they place a high priority on improving the health and safety and development needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness. However, relatively little information on the social, emotional and behavioral support of these same populations is conveyed. They also do not provide detailed information regarding their referral and follow-up services based on screenings provided. These are all important aspects of supplying full wrap-around services to Children with High Needs. Based on the evidence and information provided and the statements made above, this is a partially-implemented, medium-quality plan.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	15	9

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

- (a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;
- (b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and
- (c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(4)

Currently, Oklahoma includes family engagement standards within its QRIS. The new QRIS will continue to implement these standards. Oklahoma has implemented the Strengthening Families approach which is designed to increase family stability, improve child development and reduce child abuse and neglect. The new QRIS will require professionals to exhibit specific skills needed to properly engage families. (i.e. providing parent information on child development, establishing social networks of support, and providing training and support as children transition to kindergarten.) The same procedures and plan presented for assessments, regarding the provision of professional development and training for ECEs, will be implemented for family engagement standards. The state will also expand their Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework to include family engagement practices. The current practices utilized by the state to promote family support and engagement statewide will be increased through the work of this grant. Oklahoma currently provides home visiting through four different programs. The state will expand its efforts to coordinate these programs through the state's new data system. The state has also established Community and Parent Cafes. This program engages parents in conversations regarding healthy outcomes for their children. Efforts will also be increased to create more methods to provide parents with information regarding early childhood programs. This menu of supports which Oklahoma provides to families is comprehensive and appropriately targeted to the needs of its population. For example, research supports using home visiting as one effective method for delivering services to rural populations. However, the state did not provide explanations regarding the cultural and linguistic practices that they do use, or plan to use, in their family engagement standards. This is especially important for a state where the majority of Children with High Needs live on rural tribal lands. One explanation that is lacking in the state's proposal regarding their plan to improve their family engagement strategies overall is how they will allocate the funds within the project Strengthening Families (which is over \$5 million). This is a commendable and possibly effective use of funds, but based on the activities describe in this project, and the minimal discussions of supporting families within other criterion areas, there is not sufficient evidence to explain how the funding will be used. Based on the evidence and information provided and the statements made above, this is a partially-implemented, medium-quality plan.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	20	17
<p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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. 		
Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation		
Comments on (D)(1)		

The state currently has in place a document, called Oklahoma Core Competencies for Early Childhood Practitioners which outlines the eight competency areas that cover a body of knowledge and set of practices that all ECEs must demonstrate within their ELDP. These competencies are aligned with the state's ELD Standards and current QRIS and are broken down across five levels of implementation. The lowest level requires the lowest amount of education and experience and the least amount or complexity of implementation on the part of the ECE. The highest level then requires the most education, experience and complexity of implementation regarding the practices for each competency area. Due to the new revisions that are planned for the state's ELDS and QRIS, their first activity in this criterion is to revise the core competencies to be brought in alignment with the new standards and new rating system. They will utilize an outside consultant who will provide recommendations for revisions based on the revised QRIS and ELD Standards. These revised competencies will also be incorporated into the new professional development programs as well. Currently the state has the Oklahoma Registry: Early Care & Education Professional Development Ladder which lays out 10 levels of progression through which an ECE can progress as he or she gains credit hours, certificates, credentials and degrees. These levels coincide with the amount of education and experience required for the levels within the core competencies and also for the different levels of tiers within the QRIS. This registry requires membership by ECEs and is maintained by meeting the annual renewal requirements of credit hours of professional development. The registry is monitored by the Center for Early Childhood Professional Development at the University of Oklahoma's College of Continuing Education. In order to motivate ECEs to progress in their education, the state will make specific positive consequences result from the attainment of higher levels of credentials and degrees. This progression of education will tie into higher levels of tier ratings in the new QRIS. All of the certificates, credentials and AA, BA/BS and MA degrees were developed in collaboration with higher education institutions. As Oklahoma's ECE core competencies are revised, their workgroup, the Partnership's Professional Development and Workforce (PDW), will serve as the cross-sector coordinating body for the state participating agencies, the OPSR and the higher education institutions. The Birth to Early Care Affiliates (BECA) which is a workgroup of community colleges and university faculty facilitated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education will also be a part of the collaboration. The PDW will also review the transferability of coursework and the framework for articulation agreements that are in place between community colleges and higher education institutions in an effort to reduce the barriers between transferring between ECE programs and help develop a more seamless degree and career path for professionals. The state believes that the already strong foundation of collaboration between the state, professional development agencies and institutions of higher education will continue to be strengthened and will result in more robust ECE programs as they align with the revised Core Competencies, ELD Standards and the tiered QRIS. Based on the already existing framework of ECE Core Competencies, the professional development career ladder and the collaborative network between the state and institutions of higher education, the state has the ability to achieve their goals of revising their current competencies and implementing them within a framework of requirements and methods for progression that is seamless across universities and the workplace. The Oklahoma Registry appears to be a valuable tool in helping ECE professionals track their credits toward certificates, credentials and degrees. Based on the evidence provided and above statements, this is a substantially-implemented, high-quality plan.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.	20	10

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(2)

The state proposes the same plan for professional development for their ECEs to improve their overall knowledge, skills and abilities, as they did in C(2) to strengthen their understanding of the new Comprehensive Assessment Systems. They propose to develop the Early Learning Consortium of Oklahoma (ELCO) to assist the OU Center for Early Childhood Professional Development in providing leadership, professional development and technical assistance to support early childhood development practices. The ELCO will unify all early childhood professional development and training practices regarding core competencies, ELD Standards, standards assessment, health and development needs, family engagement, etc. The ELCO will also provide all the professional development services to the ELDPs. Examples of training and professional development infrastructure will include: in-person and web-based training modules, a certification process for completing training, web-based technical assistance for ECEs. By one year after the competencies are approved, all ELDPs participating in the QRIS will be required to use professional development funds exclusively for professional development aligned to the competencies. The state will provide one-time grants to the professional development providers on a competitive basis for improving and updating their trainings to address the revised competencies. Within the new QRIS, Oklahoma plans to continue to include and expand on the current incentives and supports for high-quality professional development. The state will continue to offer the scholarship program provided by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Scholars for Excellence in Child Care. They will assist ECEs with obtaining credentials, certificates of mastery, associate degrees and director's certificates in paying for tuition and books. A new ECE bachelor scholarship program is currently being piloted with universities that have articulation agreements with community colleges. This will be expanded during the grant period. After a certain level of education is acquired an ECE can also be eligible for a salary supplement through REWARD which is tied directly to the QRIS system. This will be adjusted as the new competencies and QRIS are revised. The state also provides \$25 vouchers to ECEs to attend local early childhood conferences. Currently, Oklahoma does not have a method for reporting the number of educators at each credentialing level who work in the state's ELDPs and participate in the QRIS. The evidence provided in Table A(1)10 is all estimated numbers regarding the status of all early learning development workforce credentials and the percent of ECEs who have the credentials. This type of tracking will now be included in the new unified statewide data system. Currently, the REWARD and Oklahoma Professional Development Registry programs maintain a database for the ECE Director's Credential and for professionals moving through the professional development ladder. The registry is voluntary and thus does not provide a complete picture of the ECE workforce. With the new QRIS all providers will have to report all workforce information through the Registry. It will continue to help ECEs track their professional development and education, be updated about professional development opportunities and allow directors to obtain training records and track their employees progress with education and training requirements. This database will also be the avenue for providing public information about ECE development, advancement and retention. Currently the state has 58 institutions and professional development providers that provide ECE certificates, credentials and degrees and all 100% provide programs that are aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. The state knows how many people graduate with credentials and degrees each year, but do not know how many ECEs currently working in the state have credentials and degrees or what kind they are. Utilizing the new requirements within the Registry and statewide data system, the state plan to start with 13% ECEs being registered in 2013 and increase by 10% increments up to 43% registered in 2015. The state proposes to increase the amount of ECE professional progressing to higher levels of education and training by 5% a year for total degrees and credentials conferred. The state currently has appropriate and adequate practices in place by which they provide training and professional development for ECEs, but they do not describe any current or future support or technical assistance programs that will assist ECEs with their individual progression up the career ladder (i.e. career guidance counselors or consultants, or a part of the Registry that also contains a personal tracking system that provides recommendations or suggestion for types or ways of progressing forward). Also, they do not describe how they let current ECEs or potential ECE professionals know about the incentive programs that they have to help them afford the costs of education that would in turn motivate potential educators to take the route of early childhood education. The state does not discuss any possible alternative methods for helping ECE professionals progress, i.e. work equals credits programs, or support for child care to help ECEs work more hours or to attend classes and thus more quickly achieve their credentials or degrees. All of these alternative methods (beside only money) of support for ECEs are important to consider as many are research-based and described as high need areas for ECEs working in rural communities. It is also not clear why the state would only expect 43% of current ECE professionals to be registered in the Registry when there will be a requirement of all ELDPs to register all professionals who are in programs participating in the new QRIS. By then of end 2015 the state has projected that 75 to 100% of all ELDPs will be participating in the new QRIS. Thus 75 to 100% of ECEs should be registered in the Registry. Based on the evidence provided and above statements, this is a partially-implemented, medium-quality plan.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	12

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).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)

Currently, the state does not have a comprehensive Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) in place. They provide screening measures on literacy of Kindergarten children. They use the DIBBELS, Literacy First or the BEAR within each school. The teachers are also coached regarding using the results in order to inform their instructional practices. The process by which the state creates the KEA will be done in conjunction with the state's new Comprehensive Assessment System as described in C(2) (involving the work of two committees of stakeholders who will provide a proposal to the OSDE). By 2012, the planning and development process will be completed and the pilot KEA will be implemented in the 2013-2014 school year with the goal of implementing the final KEA statewide in the 2014 school year. The pilot will be implemented with a cross-section of schools across Oklahoma and include a specific focus on schools with high numbers of Children with High Needs. Throughout the year of the pilot study, the state will contract with consultants to interpret the results of the KEA, develop a training manual and by April 2014 begin implementing professional development and technical assistance regarding administering the KEA and utilizing the results in order to inform their instructional practices. All results gained from the KEA will be inputted in the state's new unified data system in order to link data across programs with the goal of improving policies and practices. The data system will include elements to help identify Children with High Needs. Teachers will be trained in how to enter the results of the KEA into the data system. Ongoing consultation will be utilized to ensure data entry and results are reliable and that the results are useful to the Kindergarten teachers. The state provides evidence of the provision of funds and resources from several other sources than available within this grant. The OPSR has already set aside funds to support the development of the KEA. These funds will support the Assessment Work group that will provide recommendations for the assessment tool and procedures for collecting data. The ODE will contribute \$950,000 and the OPSR will contribute \$250,000 to purchase the new KEA and provide professional development on the use and interpretation of the KEA. The ODE is pursuing a grant to help fund the data system that will contain the KEA results (among other things). Overall, the state presents a comprehensive plan for developing a Kindergarten Entry Assessment and providing training for the teachers to use the tool and enter the data into statewide data system. Two important, but directly related pieces of this plan are missing. The state does not focus attention on how the results of the KEA will be provided to the ELDPs, nor how the ELDPs would use that data to adjust and revise their ELD Standards, their QRIS and more importantly their curriculum and daily teaching practices. This is the most important aspect of utilizing a KEA – to inform the early learning professionals about how their students perform once they have entered the K-12 school system. Secondly, while the state mentions briefly that they will utilize consultants to work with Kindergarten teachers about how to use the results of the KEA to inform changes and additions to their instruction and practices, they do not describe in any detail how this process will occur, nor how the teachers will know how to understand and utilize the results of the KEA for Children with High Needs. This is one of the explicit focuses of the grant – how do or how will teachers specifically differentiate their instruction and practices to help Children with High Needs be ready for and succeed in school. Based on the evidence and information provided and above statements, this is a partially-implemented, medium-quality plan.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(2)

Currently, Oklahoma does not have a statewide longitudinal data system. Instead, different agencies and organizations have their isolated data systems resulting in some data overlapping and some crucial data missing completely. In 2010, the state recognized this inadequacy in their early learning system overall and created the Data Systems and Coordination Workgroup to focus on creating a unified and statewide early learning data system. The state has begun their planning process for their new statewide data system and calls it the P20 Education Data System (P20EDS). The OSDE's current P12 Student Information system (the most inclusive data system to date) is the foundation for this P20 system and will eventually contain data that extends from ELDPs through K12, Career Tech, Higher Education and into the workforce. Currently the state has already saved \$600,000 through the work that they have done toward consolidating and refining data systems. The end goal for the state is to provide secure access to stakeholders regarding data, analyses, and reports they need to make informed decisions and to improve instruction through the P20+ Education Data Portal. The state's reform plan, regarding their effective early learning data system, begins with ensuring that the system covers all the Essential Data Elements. Currently all the data systems within the state are inconsistent in their coverage of these elements – with many missing altogether. The most robust system to date, the OSDE's P12 Student Information system, has been found to be missing two critical elements – the ability to validate the data in the system and the ability to accurately and consistently provide reports regarding the data within the system. In 2010, the Data Systems and Coordination Workgroup formed the Data Roundtable workgroup which contains over 75 stakeholders representing all constituencies within the early learning community to help identify the state's greatest areas of need regarding data. They have identified six critical policy goals for creating the early learning data system (i.e. connect young children to the services they need, identify which children participate in which programs, and follow program design characteristics and coordination among programs). The overall areas of focus for the early learning data system have been divided into three categories of data for understanding school readiness: Program Quality, Children and Families and Providers and Personnel. The state will continue their progress forward through the further development of the data measures required and implemented through the new QRIS and incorporated into the P20EDS. Currently, the P12 Student Information System collects data automatically from LEAs to the OSDE. This capability will be incorporated into the new P20EDS. The state plan will focus on strengthening the certification process of data so that data system will become the sources of student-level collections for linking and reporting process. This work is already supported through Oklahoma's IT Consolidation and Coordination Act. From fall, 2011 to spring 2012 a pilot study will investigate ways of ensuring that data is accurate and valid. The state is also investigating ways for school districts to manage their data systems within the new statewide data system and not just in their local system. With the goal of facilitating data linkage between agencies using appropriate standards, formats and definitions, the state has entrusted the Data Stewards Committee with developing standards needed to link data and maintain and monitor the data formats and definitions. They will also seek ways to coordinate with other states in an intra- and inter-state data sharing system. Through the additional funds provided through the grant, the state will implement six key components that they have identified as being a part of a comprehensive and effective state longitudinal data system which includes using a data warehouse that houses, cleanses and manages the data (i.e. Common Program/QRIS Application, and Enterprise Intelligence). During the past year of planning for the new P20EDS, the state has also asked its stakeholder workgroup to discuss and recommend methods for ensuring that decision-makers are informed by actionable data that leads to improved outcomes for students. The Regional Educators Advancing College, Career and Citizenship Readiness Higher (REAC3H) Network and the establishment of the formal data governance process with the OSDE have been tasked with developing effective data reporting methods. Stakeholders will eventually have access to data and reports through the P20+ Education Data Portal. The early learning agencies that have committed through MOUs to develop the data system will work through the already established Governance Framework to create data policies and procedures that meet the Data Systems Oversight Requirements. Many of the oversight requirements for governance and transparency are already in place or are planned for implementations. Overall, the state proposes a high-quality plan to expand on existing data systems in order to build a unified and comprehensive early learning data system which will achieve the goal of improving instruction, practices, services and policies. Because the state had already identified the inadequacies of their current data systems and had started, through their own policy enactment and funding, the process of building a new statewide data system, the state sufficiently demonstrates that they are fully committed and will achieve implementation of the statewide data system that they propose. Based on the evidence provided and above statements, this is a partially-implemented, high-quality plan.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	164

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
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Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System

10

5

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (P)(2)

Currently all ELDPs within center-based care facilities are licensed regardless of the amount of children cared for. There are exemptions, such as facilities operating less than 15 hours a week at an elementary school site and facilities on tribal country land. All Head Start and Early Head Start centers are licensed except those on tribal lands. Currently 95% of all tribal care and tribal Head Start facilities have voluntarily obtained licensure. Tribal care facilities also have their own licensing programs. For family child care homes licensing is required regardless of the number of children cared for. Exemptions are provided for those where children are cared for in their own home by relatives or for homes operating 15 or less hours of care each week. All other care facilities are operated at sites within the school district and operate under OSDE regulations. Other home-based programs, i.e. Part C or Start Right or Parents as Teachers operate under the regulations of OSDE and OSDH. At the end of the grant period, Oklahoma plans to have all eligible ELDPs participating in the QRIS. This evidence is sufficient to indicate that the state currently has in place a licensing system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the state and that care for two or more children. There is no mention of or discussion regarding the inspection of programs to ensure that they continue to meet the requirements of the licensure regulations and ways in which they provide supervision or consequences for programs that lose or do not meet requirements. In criterion B(2) the state proposed a plan for increasing program participation in their tiered QRIS. They have ambitious goals for increasing currently non-participating and non-eligible programs from 75% through 100% participation. While they have some good incentives and demonstrate a good track record of participation for currently eligible programs, there is not sufficient evidence or argument to lead to assuming such a great increase in participation. Based on the evidence and information provided and above statements, this is a partially-implemented, medium-quality plan.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	No

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 Status 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.

Comments on (P)(3)

Currently the state does not have a Kindergarten Entry Assessment. Overall, the state presents a comprehensive plan for developing a Kindergarten Entry Assessment and providing training for the teachers to use the tool and enter the data into statewide data system. Two important components of this plan are missing. The state does not focus attention on how the results of the KEA will be provided to the ELDPs, nor how the ELDPs would use that data to adjust and revise their ELD Standards, their QRIS and more importantly their curriculum and daily teaching practices. This is the most important aspect of utilizing a KEA - to inform the early learning professionals about how their students perform once they have entered the K-12 school system. Secondly, while the state mentions briefly that they will utilize consultants to work with Kindergarten teachers about how to use the results of the KEA to inform changes and additions to their instruction and practices, they do not describe in any detail how this process will occur, nor how the teachers will know how to understand and utilize the results of the KEA for Children with High Needs. This is one of the explicit focuses of the grant - how do or how will teachers specifically differentiate their instruction and practices to help Children with High Needs be ready for and succeed in school. Based on the fact that these crucial pieces are missing from the state's plan for development of a KEA, the state only earned 60% of the maximum points for E(1).

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.	No
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	
Comments on Absolute Priority	
<p>Overall, the state addresses this absolute priority by providing statements to the effect that they will consider Children with High Needs within their plan or that because they will be increasing the quality of their overall program that this will address the needs of Children with High Needs by receiving high-quality services. This state has a high percentage of children from different racial and cultural backgrounds within their state, they make no mention of any specific cultural and linguistic practices or methods for addressing this category of Children with High Needs (i.e. within ELD standards or assessments). The state does not provided explanations for how they will specifically consider or implement the assessment of Children with High Needs (specifically those with disabilities) within the development of their Comprehensive Assessment System. The state does not provide any detailed methods for providing training or technical assistance to help teachers understand or utilize special practices to address the different needs of children with disabilities, children who are homeless and are in foster care. The state also does not provide a plan for how they develop policies and practices to specifically help families with Children with High Needs to afford high-quality care. This application does not sufficiently address the Absolute Priority of promoting school readiness for Children with High Needs.</p>	



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # OK-5029

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: **Reviewed**
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 1:41 PM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

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

A. Successful State Systems

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development	20	17
<p>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--</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;</p> <p>(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and</p> <p>(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.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(1)
<p>Oklahoma (OK) has made significant financial investments in Early Learning and Development programs and these investments have increased in the years from 2007 to 2011. In 2007 the state's contribution was \$358,146,139 and in 2011 it was \$407,079,399. This increased financial support has resulted in progressively more children with High Needs being served over the five year period. OK is now serving 9.6% more High Needs children than in 2007 with a budget increased by 13.6%. This would indicate an increase in per child funding to ensure quality. Also, OK has a voluntary "Preschool for All" program which is funded to serve all four year olds in the state. While it is not funded for High Needs children only, it is certainly available to them. OK has supported a rich variety of policies, practices and legislation designed to serve children with High Needs. Some examples are: OK has a TQRIS •OK passed legislation to establish a voluntary pre-K program in the state school funding formula. •OK gives providers enhanced payments for having a higher quality certification on the TQRIS. •OK pioneered the use of an electronic payment system for child care services. •OK has nationally accredited child care providers at the top tier of the accreditation and payment system and 43% of the children in their programs are children with High Needs. •In 1953, OK enacted legislation to license child care. •OK passed legislation in 2006 to enact a program to care for at risk infants and toddlers. •In 2003, OK enacted legislation forming the "Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness." OK has made progress in key areas which form the building blocks of a high quality learning and development system as evidenced by the following: •OK has developed Early Learning and Development Standards that address all essential domains of school readiness. •OK is in the process of developing K-12 standards and when completed in 2014, OK Early Learning Guidelines will be updated to ensure alignment with K-12. •OK has a career ladder and has established core competencies for staff. However, as referenced in (A)(1)(d) OK has not developed a Kindergarten Entry Assessment. Also, OK has not developed a Comprehensive Assessment System. OK has done some wonderful work in the past to support service to High Needs Children. As a consequence many of the building blocks of a high quality learning system are in place as outlined above. This item is therefore scored as High Quality.</p>

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	10

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)

The state has suggested a number of ambitious goals for improving program quality and thus the outcomes for High Needs children. OK indicates that improving K assessment, the existing system of child coordinating services, improving the work force skills and developing an improved TORIS will result in the desired improvement in outcomes for children. While it is true that these are indeed important factors in improving the system for children, there is little concrete information provided about how these changes will be effected. OK does not provide a plan which has the factors defined as a High Quality plan for this application. OK states its intention to address all Focused Investment criteria. The reason given for this approach is that OK believes that work will be needed in all these criteria areas as the OK system is improved. In summary, OK has stated some ambitious and achievable goals but has not provided a High Quality plan for achievement and has not provided a viable rationale for the choice of Focused Investment areas. As a result, OK is scored in the Medium to Low Quality Range.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	6

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation

Comments on (A)(3)

OK has identified an effective organizational structure which builds on what exists. The Oklahoma State Department of Education will be the lead agency and will add staff whose responsibility will be to implement the stated goals. The current state advisory committee (Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness) will retain and expand its role in developing recommendations for program improvement. The structure is a viable one which should result in strong working relationships and good input from the field. The state plans to have staff from Smart Start Oklahoma facilitate getting information and suggestions from the field. This is a good plan as Smart Start currently has 18 community centers around the state and will expand to 24 in order to accomplish the work of this grant. This will allow for constant contact with the field. Smart Start also will be very beneficial in involving parents of children with High Needs. In addition, the Head Start Collaboration office will facilitate Head Start agencies being included and participating in planned state improvements. It will be very helpful to have the Head Start Collaboration Office assisting with the contact and inclusion of Head Start programs. Even though Head Start programs are funded direct federal to local, new Head Start Performance Standards require Head Start programs to closely coordinate with schools. Thus having the collaboration office to facilitate Head Start involvement is very useful. The state departments that will be part of the plan have developed and signed Memos of Agreement which clearly outline the roles of each of them, how decisions will be made and the scope of work of each agency. The participating agencies are Oklahoma Department of Health Services, the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, the Oklahoma State Department of Human Services and the Oklahoma State Department of Education. The MOUs and work plans are clear and viable and will contribute to accomplishment of the required outcomes for this grant. OK has provided 32 letters of support in the application. There are letters of support from the Cherokee, Chickasaw and Choctaw nations. This is important as the majority of children with High Needs are those living on Indian land. While the letters presented are strong and supportive, it would have been a stronger statement had there been letters from legislators and local community leaders as well. In summary, the state has proposed a plan which should result in positive outcomes for children with High Needs. It would been a much stronger plan if the state had included more of the elements of a High Quality plan such as a specific timeline and personnel assigned to implement each key activity. The community support demonstrated by letters included was state wide and included many facets of the Early Learning community at large. However, it would have been a stronger statement if letters from state and local elected officials had been included. Consequently, the response falls into the Partially Implemented Medium Quality response.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	8

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(4)

OK does an excellent job of describing how existing funds will be used to support Early Learning and Development. For example, OK currently spends about \$132 million of CCDF quality funds on its existing TQRIS and these funds will continue to be used in developing the revised TQRIS. Another example is that OK employs 175 licensed specialists and 15 TQRIS specialists all of whom currently assist programs to improve quality. OK has made solid investments in Early Learning and Development programs and this is made clear by the budget explanation. It is difficult to determine if the budget includes reasonable costs related to objectives, as there are significant funds proposed for equipment and supplies with little explanation of what will be purchased or the reasons for the purchases. Also, the amount of funding proposed for personnel and their benefits is very low considering the amount of staff involvement that should be needed to accomplish revision of TQRIS and other project activities. OK proposes to spend the bulk of the grant funds on one-time costs thus negating the necessity for significant funds for sustainability. For example, OK proposes to use \$11,248,208 to improve its TQRIS. The idea is that when revised and improved there will be little cost needed to monitor the systems. This same line of thought is applied to other projects in the plan. However, in this example as with the others, there will be real costs to sustain the gains and OK has not proposed a plan to meet them. For example later the application proposes to give financial incentives for programs to participate in TQRIS and this will be an ongoing cost which should increase as more programs participate, but no provision is made for it in the budget. OK has made significant financial investments in Early Learning and Development programs and wants to do more. However, use of grant funds is unclear and there is no viable plan for sustainability. Consequently, this item is scored as Medium Quality.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	7

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 that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

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

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)

OK currently has a Tiered Quality Rating System which was one of the first in the country. The current OK system has four levels 1, 1a, 2, and 3]. Level one includes all programs that are licensed. Level three encompasses programs that are accredited by ACSI, COA, NAC, NAEYC or NECPA. However, these levels are not aligned with or based on tiered program standards. Likewise, the OK plan to develop a system based on tiered standards is not a High Quality plan. OK does have a plan but it is stated in very general terms and does not completely include the key goals, related activities, timelines and responsibilities which are some primary components of a High Quality plan. Instead OK mentions that it proposes to have a consultant to do the work of recommending an enhanced Tiered Quality Rating System. This might be acceptable except that the key factors of the High Quality Plan are not included in the proposed scope of work for the consultant either. As a result it must be concluded that OK does not have a TQRIS based on a set of tiered program standards nor does it have a High Quality plan to develop one. OK does have a TQRIS that has tiers and that are measurable and differentiate quality levels. However, the TQRIS does not have standards for extremely High Quality programs. It is left to programs to seek national accreditation from one of five different organizations. This is perhaps because OK does not have a TQRIS system aligned to tiered program standards The OK TQRIS is clearly linked to the state licensing system as all licensed programs are included on level one of the system. This in itself is a step toward quality as OK has made significant investments in the state licensing system. Included in the unit are 175 licensing agents and 15

TQRIS coaches all of whom are dedicated to helping programs rise to higher quality levels. In summary, OK has a TQRIS system which must be updated and linked in a meaningful way to tiered program standards. It has some plans to do this but the plans are incomplete. The current TQRIS system is linked to licensing but must be revised in order to assist programs to move to higher levels of quality. This item is therefore scored as Partially Implemented Medium Quality.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	9

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).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(2)

Not all publicly funded programs in Oklahoma participate in its TQRIS. Likewise, the state does not have a High Quality plan to have all programs participate. The plan in the application is stated in general terms and does not totally include the specific goals, activities, and responsible personnel required of a high quality plan. As an example, the plan states that the OK Department of Education will provide information to schools by 2013 that they are eligible to participate in TQRIS. Further, it says that by the end of 2013, 25% of the lowest performing schools will participate. It does not explain what will be done to ensure that this 25% participation takes place. Another example is that it mentions that all Head Start programs in the state will participate. Head Starts, which are licensed, do participate now at level one but there is no explanation of what incentives would be given to encourage Head Starts which do not have to be licensed to participate in working toward higher levels on a TQRIS. There is also no explanation of how licensed Head Starts would be encouraged to strive for higher levels on the OK TQRIS. It is unlikely that Head Starts would participate, without some incentive, because they already are required to implement a very high quality set of federal standards. OK currently has a powerful system of care which helps families afford higher quality child care and concentrates care in areas of children of High Needs. This is evidenced by the following facts: • Families up to 85% of median income are eligible for subsidized child care. • OK serves all eligible families who apply and has no waiting list. • OK has a tiered reimbursement system which rewards programs which attain higher levels on their current TQRIS. • 43% of children enrolled in programs rated at the highest level are subsidized children. • Program providers receive a financial incentive for serving children with disabilities. • OK has preschool that is free and voluntary available to every 4 year old in the state. These facts support the idea that OK is currently doing a great job of helping families to get high quality care. What is not clear in the application is what specific actions will be taken in the future to expand opportunities for more children. OK has set ambitious goals for increasing program participation in TQRIS but the plan to achieve these goals is vague. It is in fact doubtful if it can be done without some further planning. For example, OK states again that Head Start programs will participate and advance beyond level one, but no incentive is mentioned for them to do so. Likewise, the OK pre-K centers are cited as being included in the future but no explanation of how to overcome obstacles which currently keep them from participating is given. OK has many children with High Needs and has made great efforts to provide for them. While the state developed a TQRIS early on, it has not moved to a system based on tiered Quality Standards. It currently does not have High Quality plans to develop such a system or to increase the programs using it. For these reasons, this item is scored as Partially Implemented Medium Quality.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	9

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

OK does have a viable monitoring tool and process currently in place. The state makes three visits per year to child care facilities to determine the extent to which they meet the state licensing requirements as well as their level on the current state TQRIS. In addition, OK uses Environmental Rating Scales for observations of classes and does a random selection of classes to observe. Finally, the state has training procedures which ensure the inter rater reliability of monitors. It should be noted again that the OK state pre-school programs are not assessed with this system. OK acknowledges the need to revise its TQRIS system and develop benchmarks for programs to achieve levels higher than the current system measures. Further, OK understands and acknowledges that the benchmarks must be articulated with teacher training and learning standards. However, OK does not have a high quality plan to put an updated monitoring system in place. The OK plan runs through a litany of changes that must be made but does not provide a convincing plan to enact them. There are no clearly stated goals with attendant activities, and few specific dates. In fact, the OK plan sounds more like a recapitulation of the requirements in the scoring guide. So while OK does currently have an effective system, the state has acknowledged its limitations but has not developed a High Quality plan to improve the system. OK has made significant efforts to report child care center data to parents and the public. The state sponsors a website that lists the locations, current TORIS status and any safety violations for all licensed child care programs in the state. OK also publishes an annual report giving some general information about its state pre-K programs. The applications's screen shots of the child care center information show very easy to read, complete and helpful information. However, information provided for other Early Learning Programs such as the state pre-K program is very general and does not lend itself to use by parents in selecting programs. In summary, OK has a rating system in place but acknowledges that it needs to be updated. The state does not present a High Quality plan for updating the system. OK does provide very complete and valuable information to parents regarding its licensed child care programs but does not provide useful information to parents about other programs such as the state pre-K program. For these reasons, this item is scored in the Partially Implemented Medium Quality category.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

OK has developed policies and practices to encourage programs to improve. The state pays higher reimbursement rates as child care providers go up the levels of the OK TQRIS. OK also has begun a pilot program with private funding to enhance funding for at risk children, from birth to three years of age, enrolled in Early Learning and Development programs. Likewise, the state provides financial incentives for staff to achieve additional training and improve their skills. These are very positive aspects of the current OK system and have resulted in 94% of OK children in child care being enrolled in programs rated in tier 2 or above of the OK TQRIS. However, there is a need for OK to expand these policies and practices to include all programs, most notably the OK pre-K program. The plans provided by OK to upgrade and expand its system of helping programs with continuous improvement are lacking. One of the most glaring weaknesses in the plan is that many of the proposed plan actions require provision of financial incentives after the end of the grant period to assist programs to continue to improve. OK has already said in another section of the application that there will not be post grant increased costs and thus there will be no need for funds to sustain activities begun as part of this grant. OK proposes to assist working families primarily by assisting them to better access programs and supports that are already in place. In addition, the state proposes to encourage the braiding of funding that is already happening with Head Start and others and to attempt to relax barriers to braiding CCFP with pre-K funds to create full day programs. There seems to be nothing new in this plan. It is primarily a recounting of programs that are in place coupled with a hope of somehow getting more out of them. OK has set goals for increasing the number of programs in the TQRIS top tiers and for increasing the number of High Needs children in these programs. However, there is no substantial plan given for how this will be accomplished. In summary, OK does have policies and practices in place to encourage continuous program improvement and OK acknowledges that these need to be expanded and updated. OK proposes to assist working families primarily by encouraging braiding of funding of existing programs and helping families get more services from the existing family support programs. Although OK does set goals for programs rising to higher TQRIS levels based on tiered standards, it does not present a High Quality plan to achieve this. Likewise, although there are goals, there is no High Quality plan to increase the number of High Needs children being served. Consequently, this item is scored as Partially Implemented Medium Quality.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (B)(5)

OK has done two validation studies which seek to determine if the tiers in its rating system do reflect different levels of program quality. Unfortunately the studies were done in 2003 and 2004 and are not only outdated but somewhat inconclusive. The authors of the 2003 study say, "...the sheer number of statistical tests performed on these data mean that some of the significant findings could have occurred by chance." That being said, it is a testament to the desire of OK to use an effective TQRIS that this study was done. OK still indicates a desire to examine whether the tiers in its proposed revised TQRIS reflect differential levels of quality and has proposed a plan to do so. This plan does encompass many of the elements of a High Quality plan and if enacted should result in determining if tiers in the state plan do in fact reflect quality. OK has not done a study of whether changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children learning, development and/or school readiness, although a plan to accomplish this is included in the application. While it does include some aspects of a High Quality Plan, it is not a High Quality plan. In fact, the plan proposed is somewhat vague. In summary, OK has done some studies to validate the connection between TQRIS levels and program quality. The studies however are out-dated and inconclusive. The state does have a plan to establish the connection between the tiers and quality. OK does not provide studies relating TQRIS levels to child Early Learning and Development or school readiness. As a result, this item is scored in the medium range.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each 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

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	15	9
<p>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--</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(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.</p>		
Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation		

Comments on (C)(1)		
<p>OK does have a set of Early Learning and Development standards which are appropriate and cover all domains of School Readiness. Likewise they cover all age groups from infants to preschoolers and are aligned with the K-3 academic standards (PASS) in literacy and math. OK indicates that further work will be done to align Early Learning Standards with K-12 standards. However, the plan presented for future revisions and alignment of standards is partial and does not qualify as a High Quality plan. The states Early Learning and Development standards are not well incorporated into program standards or curricula. The application indicates that preschool teachers are "... expected to develop curriculum based on the Early Learning Guidelines." However, there is no mechanism in place to ensure that this is done. The state also indicates that Early Learning and Development programs are required to base their curricula on the Early Learning Guidelines "through a series of requirements in individual programs." However, there is no explanation or evidence given of such requirements. OK has developed a very well done Workforce Knowledge and Competency framework which is aligned to its Early Learning and Development standards. The framework has been publicized and is being used by OK training institutions and higher education institutions. OK has done a good job of promoting and having its standards accepted. OK also has processes in place to promote knowledge and acceptance of the Early Learning standards across programs. One factor is that all training provided must align to the Early Learning standards in order to be approved by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. OK has a Professional Development Registry that collects the verification that training received by staff is in alignment with the standards. This system seems effective and well developed. However, at this time it is voluntary and OK plans to make it mandatory for licensed programs in the future. OK plans to revise and improve its standards and its alignment mechanisms. However, the plans proposed are not High Quality plans. Rather the plans are a listing of activities with some dates attached. The goals statements specifying actual and specific responsibilities for accomplishment are lacking. In summary, OK does have a set of appropriate Early Learning and Development standards. The Workforce training is also aligned with the standards. However, no evidence was found that the standards are incorporated in curricula. Consequently this item is scored in the Partially Implemented Medium Quality range.</p>		

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	15	8
<p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--</p> <p>(a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;</p> <p>(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;</p>		

(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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(2)

OK does not currently have a comprehensive assessment system. However, it does have many of the components of such a system in place. For example, environmental rating scales are used for TQRIS participating programs. Another example is that the Ages and Stages questionnaire is used in Early Intervention programs. It is clear however that there is not a comprehensive assessment system used state wide. The plans in section C-2 and the one referenced in E-1 of the application are cited by the state as explaining how the state will bring disparate systems together and move to a unified comprehensive assessment system. However, the plans are somewhat general in their content. There are some activities and dates cited in the plans and the general direction that the state wishes to move is made clear. Even so, the plans do not contain the clearly stated goals, related activities and specific responsibilities for their accomplishment that are expected of a High Quality plan. OK does have some current training opportunities which assist Early Childhood educators in understanding the content process and purpose of some assessments. A professional development opportunity titled Focused Portfolio I & II explains how to do assessments using children's portfolios. Likewise, Sooner Start Child Guidance clinicians consult with OK Early Childhood educators and explain assessment results and how to use the information generated by assessments. The OK plan to strengthen support for Early Childhood educators to become proficient in using assessments is somewhat weak. The plan relies on the development of an entity called the Early Learning Consortium for Professional Development (ELCPD). The ELCPD will then provide needed professional development in many areas. However there is no High Quality plan for development of the consortium. While there is a plan for staff development, it too lacks the specific goal, activity, responsibility and timeline statements required to be a High Quality plan. In summary, OK does not currently have a comprehensive assessment system but does have several programs which do assessments. The state has some plans to train Early Childhood educators in the use of assessments but the plans are not High Quality plans. As a result, this item is scored in the Minimally Implemented Medium Quality range.

	Available	Score
(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.	15	9

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(3)

OK currently has a set of licensing standards which are designed to ensure children's health and safety. Also, the Early Learning guidelines provide guidance for teachers to promote the optimum physical, social and emotional development in children. However, evidence supporting a process for ensuring that health and behavioral screening and follow-up occur is not included. The reader is directed to appendices 24 and 25 for health related information but data in these appendices is unrelated to health issues. Likewise, the proposed plan for ensuring health coverage is lacking. The plan continues to reference the plan in section B-1 for improving the TQRIS system with statements that the new TQRIS will resolve the health screening and follow-up issues. Unfortunately, the TQRIS revision plan in section B-1 is not a High Quality plan and does not explain how and what revisions will

be made. OK does have some positive methods of supporting Early Childhood educators in their effort to meet child health needs. The state has 42 clinicians that provide on-site child care consulting on health issues. OK also supports a toll-free telephone service where Early Childhood educators can call to get assistance with a variety of issues including health and health related information. OK also has Child Guidance clinicians who provide training for Early Childhood educators. Even so, there is much to do in order to meet the need of having all Early Childhood educators, state-wide, trained and supported in meeting health standards. Unfortunately OK does not provide a High Quality plan to accomplish this. Rather the state lists some activities which would be carried out using \$200,000 of the grant funds. OK has made some progress in promoting healthy eating and exercise. This year the state began using the Lets Move Child Care curriculum which focuses on healthy eating, reduction of TV and computer use and increasing physical activity for children. Also, OK has 120 physicians who have ordered material from the state and used it to do well-child checks. Likewise the University of Oklahoma has provided ongoing training for physicians in performing well-child checks. OK has made significant progress in leveraging resources to increase screening, referral and follow-up health care for High Needs children as evidenced by the following: • OK has adapted the Reach Out and Read program in which physicians encourage parents to read to their children. • The Oklahoma Health Care Authority has increased efforts to enroll children in Medicaid. Currently there are 187,599 children enrolled. • The Oklahoma Child Care Study Center provided 120 physicians with screening tools and measures for the well-child checks. • The University of Oklahoma Child Study Center continues to provide on-going training in well-child assessments. • The state has engaged in a three year pilot project to make better connections to referral sources based on developmental screenings done in physicians' offices in 4 identified High Needs counties. These are all excellent and helpful efforts. However, OK does not provide High Quality plans to continue to leverage resources to provide for on-going child health need. In summary, OK does have some standards for ensuring child health and safety in place but does not have a plan to ensure that uniform health and behavioral screening occurs and follow-up is done. The state has some support for staff but does not present High Quality plans for expanding such support. OK promotes good eating habits and physical activity to a degree now and has leveraged some child health resources. There is no High Quality plan provided for meeting the continuing health needs of children by leveraging more resources. Consequently, this item is scored as Partially Implemented Medium Quality.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	15	6

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

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

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

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

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(4)

OK has a TQRIS which does include some family engagement requirements in order to move to higher levels. However, there is no evidence of cultural or linguistic appropriateness apparent in the standards even though the majority of High Needs children in OK are those living on Indian land. The OK Early Learning Guidelines do have a paragraph titled "Inclusion" in the introduction. This paragraph gives some brief suggestions for teachers in including different languages and cultures. However, the information is very brief, is dated and not in-line with current thinking about dual language learners. Also, there is no current system or High Quality Plan to incorporate family engagement standards across systems. In the area of Family Engagement there can be no discussion of training to implement the standards as the Early Learning guidelines for OK do not have Family Engagement standards. As mentioned, the TQRIS does have some standards. Also, the Workforce Knowledge and Competency framework has some required Family Engagement competencies. However, these documents are not aligned and do not address the cultural and linguistic aspects of parent engagement in any meaningful way. OK continues to mention that its revised TQRIS will have these items but the plan to revise the TQRIS is also not a High Quality plan and is not clear or convincing. OK is making progress in some areas of family engagement. The state has a well developed home visiting program funded with federal, state, local and private funds. The program serves over 6,000 families with a budget of \$33million. This is an-going effort in OK which has been in place for 20 years. OK has also adopted the Strengthen Families Initiative and established "Community Cafes" to meet with parents and assist them in learning ways to enhance their children's learning and development. OK does not present a High Quality plan to develop and align Family Engagement standards. In summary, OK has some family engagement standards in place that have no appropriate cultural or linguistic component. OK does not have a complete set of aligned standards for Family Engagement but does have some Workforce training guidance for Family Engagement. OK is, and has been for years, engaging families in a state wide home visiting program. Consequently, this item is scored in the Minimally Implemented Medium Quality range.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	20	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(1)

OK does have a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework which is designed to teach educators to promote child learning and development. The Framework addresses all of the Essential Domains of School Readiness and is laid out in a very user friendly fashion. OK currently has an appropriate statewide progression of degrees and credentials which are aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. The certificates are laid out in 10 levels starting with level one being 20 hours of approved training in the past 12 months. Level 10 is a BA/BS with at least 24 units in E.C.E. The degree/training progression seems appropriate and OK provides evidence of how the degrees are aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. OK provides a list of current training institutions but does not convincingly explain how their programs are aligned with the Framework. Instead, statements regarding how alignment will take place in the future are offered. There is no High Quality plan for alignment included. In summary, OK has a valid Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. It also has a statewide set of required credentials aligned with the framework. However, it does not present evidence of engaging postsecondary institutions in aligning professional development opportunities with the framework. Accordingly, this item is scored in the Partially Implemented Medium Quality range.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.	20	11

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(2)

OK currently does provide some aligned professional development but recognizes the need to improve and increase offerings. OK presents a plan in which it proposes to develop the Early Learning Consortium of Oklahoma to accomplish this goal. The plan has some details regarding how professional development offerings will be expanded and states the intention to have the Consortium be the sole source of professional development for programs participating in the TQRIS. While this plan is better stated than some of the plans in this application, it continues to be global and lacking in detail in its explanation of the work plan. OK currently has some incentives that encourage professional development. Among them are the following: •A scholarship program to support CDA and early childhood coursework is offered. •A B.A. scholarship program is currently being piloted at East Central University. •Early Childhood Educators may be eligible for salary supplements after completing specified education requirements. •Training vouchers are provided to each licensed facility and can be used to attend local child care conferences. While these are positive, OK does not provide a plan to ensure that future supports are in place to promote career advancement in a way that is articulated with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. OK currently has a voluntary Professional Development Registry. OK proposes in the future to make the system mandatory for programs which will participate in their revised TQRIS system. OK cites many benefits that will occur for individuals and organizations when this is done. However, there is no plan provided with any level of sufficient detail to ensure the possibility of enacting such a revised registry. OK currently has some postsecondary institutions that have programs aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. Also, it has set goals for increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators progressing to higher credential levels. However, it has not provided a High Quality plan sufficient to ensure proposed changes. In summary, OK has plans to provide more access to staff development. OK also has some incentives for professional development but does not provide a plan for incentives and an articulated career path aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. The state has a voluntary Professional Registry but does not have a High Quality plan to broaden the data collected and reported by the registry. Consequently, this item is scored as Partially Implemented Medium Quality.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	12
<p>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--</p> <p>(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(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).</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)

OK does not currently have a Kindergarten Assessment except in the area of literacy. However, the state has proposed a High Quality plan which has potential for a Kindergarten Assessment that does cover all Domains of School Readiness. The plan does not however, reference dual language learners or children with disabilities. OK has a High Quality plan to do pilot testing of its new Kindergarten Assessment and to be fully implemented by 2014/2015. The pilot will be done in 2013 and results analyzed and included in a revised assessment during the spring of 2014. With the start of the 2014/2015 school year, the assessment will be administered state wide. The state has a High Quality plan to ensure that data are included are included in their longitudinal data system and are accessible to Kindergarten teachers and others. OK also has a plan to train Kindergarten teachers to input data. OK proposes to implement their new Kindergarten Assessment with funds from the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness and the State Department of Education. Also as part of the state professional development plan, training in administering and using the Kindergarten Assessment will be offered. In summary, the state does not have an appropriate Kindergarten Assessment but has proposed a plan to develop one. OK also has a High Quality plan to pilot and implement its assessment by 2014/2015. OK proposes to implement the assessment with state personnel and funding from the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness and the State Department of Education. Because OK does Kindergarten Assessment of Literacy and has a high quality plan to improve and continue to use Kindergarten Assessment and report the data; this item is scored in the Partially Implemented Medium Quality category.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	10

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(2)

OK acknowledges that it has many data collection systems that collect valuable information but that the data are not consolidated in one location. The state has been working on rectifying this and has done a great deal of positive work related to data collection and reporting. However, it does not include in its application a clear statement of how all essential data elements will be incorporated into the system or how they would be entered by participating agencies. The state does have a High Quality plan for exchanging data among state agencies and for complying with privacy laws. However, since OK has not proposed a High Quality plan for including all of the essential data elements, it is not possible to describe a system which generates relevant data. In summary, OK has done some positive work in considering how to consolidate its data systems, exchange data among state agencies and protect privacy. The state, however, has not proposed a plan which includes all the essential data elements or how to generate information. Consequently, this item is scored in the Partially Implemented Medium Quality range.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	167

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	9

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (P)(2)

OK has an excellent well developed set of licensing regulations which cover all the programs that are not exempt. One significant accomplishment by OK is that even though programs for children living on tribal land are exempt, OK has gotten voluntary agreement from these programs and 95% of them also participate in the OK licensing system. OK currently has a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) in which all licensed programs participate. The current TQRIS has four levels of quality ranging from being licensed at level one to national accreditation at the top level. The state acknowledges that its TQRIS needs to be revised and is planning to revise it. In summary, OK has excellent licensing standards in which all non-exempt programs participate. The state also has a TQRIS in which all licensed programs participate. Consequently, this item is scored as a Substantially Implemented High Quality Response.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	No

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 Status 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.

Comments on (P)(3)

OK does not have a Kindergarten Assessment that meets selection criteria in (E)(1). OK did not score 70 percent or more on criterion(E)(1)

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.	Yes

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.

Comments on Absolute Priority

OK has many of the elements of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs in place. It's preschool program for all four year old children in the state is an excellent asset. The fact that programs on Indian Land are exempt and yet 95% of them participate in the licensing system is exemplary. Also the state is serving 100% of the CCDF eligible families who apply. The state has developed Early Learning Guidelines a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and has a Kindergarten literacy assessment. In addition to these existing aspects of the system which will enable children to enter Kindergarten ready to succeed, the state plans to do more. OK plans to develop and implement a comprehensive assessment system. Additionally it will align the Early Learning Guidelines with the K-12 standards. Finally, it will revise and improve the TQRIS.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # OK-5029

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 6:54 AM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

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

A. Successful State Systems

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development	20	16
<p>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--</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;</p> <p>(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices, and</p> <p>(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.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

Comments on (A)(1) OK has approximately 311,000 children age 0-5, of whom 53% are low income. 21% of children are below poverty, which puts OK children at a higher-than-average risk compared to the nation as a whole. OK has relatively low proportions of dual language learners and migrant children. A very high proportion of OK children live on Indian lands. Although the percentage of OK children of Native American heritage is not reported, it is presumably above the national average. (A)(1)(a): In 2011, OK spent \$407 million in state, local, and private contributions for Early Learning and Development (ELD) programs. This is roughly \$1,300 per child age 0-5 in the population or \$2,460 per high need child in the population. Between 2007 and 2011, OK increased total funding for ELD programs by 13.6%; this is about three times the increase in the state's percentage of children living in poverty. OK benefited from American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds around 2009 and suffered from state budget cuts in 2010-2011. ELD funding was not cut disproportionately to other state priorities; there is no evidence provided that ELD programs were disproportionately protected. The highest proportion of state funds support universal preK administered by the OK department of education. In this particular sector, funding has increased by 42%, enrollment by 9%, and cost per child (as estimated by earmarked state preK funds divided by preK headcount) has risen 33% to a current level of \$10,475 per child. Although comparisons with inflation are not provided, these figures suggest that there has been a functional increase in per-child spending in preK. Temporary Assistance to Need Families (TANF) and Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) contributions are the next-largest sources of state revenue and also appear to support the largest number of children. Considering CCDF figures alone, state funding for CCDF has risen by 12%, enrollment has declined 12%, and earmarked funds per enrolled child has increased 26% to a current approximate level of \$461 per child. OK also has made notable investments in a pilot infant-toddler program and three home visiting programs that address different populations. Private sector contributions comprise 60% of the funding for the infant-toddler pilot. OK appears to have made a substantial investment in early learning and development (ELD), with an especially high per child investment in preK classrooms administered by the public schools. This is a strength of the application. Evidence concerning the current quality of the OK ELD system is incomplete. No independent evaluation of the universal preK program is given. However 49% of first grade children fail to meet literacy standards; this suggests

that there is room to improve the quality of ELD services. On the other hand, a 2003 evaluation of CCDF programs (Appendix 14) notes that 80% of classrooms had environment quality scores in the mid-range or higher. (A)(1)(b): The required data tables do not include unduplicated headcounts of children served, so these data represent filled slots rather than individual children. According to the (A)(1) narrative section, OK had an impressive 71% of all four-year-olds enrolled in universal preK in 2009-2010. Since 2007, the number of children with high needs (CHN) enrolled in preK has increased by 9.6%. In this same time period, the number of CHN served by CCDF funds has decreased by 11%. The reason for this decline is not explained, i.e., what percentage of these children are no longer receiving any form of ELD support vs. their service has shifted to another sector such as preK. Primarily due to ARRA funds the number of Early Head Start (EHS) sites has increased. Enrollment has increased dramatically in the state infant-toddler pilot project but remains small in absolute number. OK has three home visiting programs, which appear to play a prominent role in ELD services. Despite the receipt of federal grants, enrollment of CHD in home visiting programs has decreased by 11-17%, depending on the specific program. It appears that the overall enrollment of CHN in ELD programs has remained relatively steady, with increases in preK and decreases in other ELD sectors. (A)(1)(c): Currently 98% of school districts provide universal preK classrooms and over 70% of age-eligible children are enrolled. Research indicates that CHD have better outcomes in classrooms that are economically diverse. Thus, universal as compared to targeted preK may be especially helpful for CHN, if individual classrooms are economically diverse. Per the (A)(1) application narrative, OK childcare policies have received high ratings from a national advocacy group for performance in areas including childcare regulations and home visiting. OK has had a tiered quality rating system (TORIS) since 1998 and pays a high reimbursement premium (67%) for top-tier programs as an incentive. OK uses electronic reimbursement to providers, which should encourage their participation. OK participates in IDEA Parts B and C and regulates childcare facilities. Legislation and policies are a strength of this application. (A)(1)(d): OK has had ELD standards for ages 0-2 and 3-5. According to Table (A)(1)(6) these standards address all required elements. Considerable room for improvement is seen in the current state of Comprehensive Assessment Standards (CAS). Only Head Start, Early Head Start and the pilot state infant-toddler program meet all CAS requirements, while other ELD sectors lag far behind. Family involvement practices are given in detail in Table (A)(1)(9). For some ELD sectors, many practices are already mandated at the federal level (e.g., Head Start/EHS, IDEA). Family practices are addressed in both the CCDF and quality rating requirements, e.g., programs are required to have a family handbook or bulletin board, and to greet families daily. These are standard family engagement strategies that are of low to moderate intensity in terms of program effort required. OK has developed workforce competencies, related credentials, and a professional development (PD) training system. The current professional registry is voluntary and no estimates are given for participation rates. About 30 institutions of higher education provide relevant degrees or credentials and their curricula are aligned with workforce competencies. Current kindergarten readiness assessments address language and literacy domains only. Current data systems are agency or program specific and cross-agency data sharing does not appear to occur at this time. Most programs have unique child and program IDs and track child attendance. There is a K-12 longitudinal data system in place. Overall, this is a high quality response. OK has an existing TORIS, universal preK with very high enrollment, and three home visiting programs each of which serve a different need. These are clear strengths of this application. OK also has ELD standards and workforce competencies. Other building blocks—health practices, assessment, and data systems—are partially in place.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	10

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)

(A)(2)(a): Two very broad goals are presented, (a) to ensure that all children start kindergarten ready to succeed and (b) to increase access to high quality ELD programs for CHN. Additional goals are addressed in sections B-E and related Appendixes but there is no single place in which all goals are shown together. Some goals are ambitious (e.g., 100% of OK preK programs will participate in the new TORIS). Other goals cannot be judged as ambitious or not because the goals are too vague (e.g., to develop a new TORIS system without specifying how the new tiers will be defined or what aspects of the current system will be retained). Since OK has many aspects of a statewide system in place, most goals appear to be achievable. (A)(2)(b): The main mechanism for achieving these goals is a revised TORIS that will have almost universal participation and addresses all required components. This TORIS forms the basis of developing or revising all other aspects of the plan, such as PD systems and data sharing. A new kindergarten assessment will be developed. A logic model is presented in Appendix 4 and a summary of work groups, responsibilities, and products is included in Appendix 6. The key players are the OK State Department of Education (OSDE), State Department of Health (OSHD) and State Department of Human Services (OKDHS) and their current partners. These are the same agencies that currently

conduct the lion's share of ELD services in the state. The plan does not create any new agencies nor does it appear to require any reorganization of existing structures. A number of work groups are planned. Much of the work will be started by consultants (yet to be named) and approved by the work groups. All key agencies are represented in each work group. All key agencies work on all aspects of the plan; no explanation is given for how this might represent a more effective or efficient organizational model than the status quo. For the most part, the overall plan is logical but thin on details. It is more of a plan for a plan than a detailed road map with broad goals, specific objectives, strategies for meeting objectives, milestones, responsible persons, and progress indicators. See sections B-D below for specific comments on different elements of the plan. (A)(2)(c): OK has chosen to address all of the optional criteria in sections C, D, and E. The rationale given is that all criteria are needed to have a comprehensive system. This section of the application does not directly address why OK will be better served and more successful by spreading efforts widely rather than building on areas of existing strength or shoring up areas of greatest need. This is a medium quality response, on the overlapping border of the medium-high and medium-low categories. All elements of a comprehensive ELD system are addressed, but with varying degrees of clarity and detail.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	6

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (A)(3)

(A)(3)(a): No new organizations or government agencies will be created. OSDE will be the lead agency and key players include the State Advisory Council (aka the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness or OPSR), OSDH, and OKDHS. Other agencies with responsibilities that are not included in the organizational chart include the state Department of Commerce, the Head Start collaboration office(HSSCO) and the IDEA Part C Interagency Coordinating Council. The chain of command is unclear. For example, it is stated that "final decisions related to the State Plan will be made by each agency responsible for implementation" but it is also stated that "the Department of Education will serve as the grant lead, making all final decisions." OPSR will convene collaboration meetings. OPSR is above the OSDE on the organizational chart, but no mention is made in the narrative of OPSR setting policy for RTT-ELC or serving in a role akin to a board of directors. As described in Table (A)(3)-1 each agency will be assigned lead roles largely in keeping with their current purview, i.e., kindergarten readiness assessment to the OSDE, TQRIS to the OKDHS)with participation by the other agencies. The specific details of how agencies will effectively coordinate their work appear to be in need of development. It also appears that decision-making and conflict resolution strategies will need to be developed. Stakeholder involvement will occur through existing OPSR committees. The number of such stakeholders and their specific roles are not described.

(A)(3)(b): Memoranda are included from Smart Start, OKDHS, OSDH, and the Department of Commerce (in which the HSSCO is housed). Each memorandum appears to cover the required information. The scope of work referenced in Exhibit 1 attached to each memorandum provides more detail on the actual responsibilities of each agency, e.g., "develop web-based applications for entry of assessment data." Financial commitments from each agency are not specified but agencies do agree to adhere to the RTT-ELC budget, for which agency contributions are expected. (A)(3)(c): Letters of support are provided from 31 intermediary and 49 community organizations. Many of the letters from the intermediary organizations describe the organization's current activities and/or general role they will assume in the plan; this was consistently the case for Smart Start county-level groups. Letters from community organizations are not individualized and include almost identical content. In summary, a governance structure is outlined that builds almost entirely on existing structures and participants. The lead agency currently administers a large, universal preK program. Appropriate commitments are included. However, this structure is complex and has many parts. Few details are provided regarding specific procedures to ensure effective and efficient collaboration. All key players appear to be one board and the Smart Start county-level organizations appear to provide a good avenue for input from families. Participants appear to have a history of working together. The new TQRIS will apply to ELD programs administered by different agencies. This is a medium quality response that is partially implemented.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	2

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(4)

(A)(4)(a): This section provides some information on current funding sources, key programs, number of dedicated agency staff, and children currently served, but at different levels of detail for different agencies. In addition to state school system formula funds and federal block grants, OK has received several federal grants for programs such as home visiting and positive behavior support. Per Table (A)(4), OK will contribute \$6.8 million, equal to about 11% of RTT-ELC funds requested. This is a modest in-kind contribution. It is not clear how the monies listed in Table (A)(4) will be used, as neither the overall budget narrative nor the agency budget narratives describe how existing funds will be used. (A)(4)(b): Per Table I-3, the majority of new funds will be used for the Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS)(28%), data systems (21%), and the new TQRIS (20%). The first two categories are areas that have not been well developed in OK, so it appropriate that a large share of total funds is allocated to these projects. However, it remains unclear the 13% allotted to PD will result in substantial change in teacher qualifications. The total budget for years 1 and 2 is approximately twice the size of the final two budget years. This

is consistent with the stated strategy of dedicating funds early on to new systems development in preparation for later implementation. Depending on the year, 50-70% of funds are allocated to OSDE, the lead agency and a consistently small share to OPSR. The balance of funds spend in-house vs. distributed to localities and partners is 14% overall (Table 1-1). This varies across agency budgets: 10% for OSDE, 27% for OKDHS, 0% for OSDH, and 20% for OPSE. This suggests that localities and partners will be provided with some financial resources to implement new mandates or priorities. A consistent area of concern with (A)(4) is the lack of clear and detailed information on how funds will be spent. The budget for the OKDHS shows an appropriate match of funds to tasks and for the most part, this is also the case for the OSDH. Each of these two budgets support a program manager and a small number of support staff. Personnel, equipment, and supply costs are modest and allowing for a substantial portion of grant funds to go for field-related expenses such training and educating parents and providers and providing incentives. 57% of the OKDHS and 40% of the OSDH budgets are slated for training. However, details of these training expenses are not provided. 10% of the OKDHS budget is earmarked for incentives. It is less clear why 38% of the OSDH budget is allocated to supplies, which is an extremely high proportion. The supplies section of the agency budget narrative describes "a total of \$2,500,000 to inform and strengthen Early Learning programs and educators regarding the purpose and use" of the CAS. It is not clear what these supplies will be and how they will serve an educational function; perhaps these costs are for printing and dissemination of training or assessment materials. Budgets for the two other agencies appear problematic. In the OPSR budget, 69% of total costs are allocated to budget category 8, "Other." No explanation of these costs is provided in the agency budget narrative. Finally, there appear to be unacceptable discrepancies between the budget table (Table II-1) and the associated budget narrative for the ODSE budget. In line 4 of Table II-1, \$11.96 million or 33% of total funds are allocated to equipment. Despite this extraordinary sum, the budget narrative only describes \$12,430 in "standard" equipment such as five personal computers and cell phones. Line 4 indicates that \$8.5 million or 24% of the OSDE budget is allocated for supplies. As with the OSDH, the budget narrative indicates that supply money will be used to "inform and strengthen" programs and educators on the new CAS without explaining what educational tasks will be achieved and how this can be accomplished using supplies. Line 8 indicates that \$7.38 million or 20% of the OSDE budget is allocated to "Other". However, only \$1.93 million dollars worth of items are described in the corresponding section of the agency budget narrative. On the positive side, 10% of the OSDE budget is allocated for external distribution in the form of TQRIS incentives. (A)(4)(c): The overall strategy described is to use RTT-ELC funds for high-cost, one-time items such as data system development. No specific commitments are made for funding sources after the end of the grant period. Overall, the response to this section is problematic. There does not appear to be clear plan on how the requested monies will be spent, nor any justification of why these funds are necessary and adequate to complete the plan of work. This is a low quality response.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	7

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 that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

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

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)

(B)(1)(a): OK has had a voluntary TQRIS system since 1998 that applies to licensed family childcare homes (FCCH) and childcare centers (CCC) but not to ELD programs administered by the OSDE such as universal preK and special education. The present system has 4 levels. The lowest level comprises being licensed, and the highest level requires national accreditation. The current system addresses workforce qualifications, core competencies, family engagement, health, and data but not CAS or ELD standards (although OK does have ELD standards). Teacher credentials and/or continuing PD hours are required to maintain or rise through the system. PD supports are available, including training and scholarships. Although program standards were updated in 2009, OK feels that the current system sets the quality bar too low and seeks to create a new TQRIS that raises quality standards and incorporates each of the six criterion in (B)(1)(a). An evaluation of the TQRIS system

comparing data from 1999 and 2002 is included in Appendix 16. The report provides validation for the current TQRIS system, demonstrating widespread differences in quality components across rating levels. It was concluded that OK has been able to increase the number of TQRIS participants, that most centers not already at the highest rating continue to progress to a higher tier, and that gains have been made in the percentage of CHN served in high quality centers. A national report card on TQRIS (Appendix 14) provides a positive overall evaluation while also identifying three weaknesses—ratios, teacher and director education requirements, and the lack of threshold scores for the Environment Rating Scale (ERS). The plan to create a new TQRIS system includes: (a) hiring a consultant to conduct a review of best practices and make recommendations for improvement, and (b) convening a quality work group (QuASA) to take these recommendations and develop a new rating system. The new rating system will involve scales for each of items (B)(1)(a)1-6, but how this will be done remains to be explored. A key objective for the new TQRIS is to raise the quality bar compared to the current ratings system. However, there is no discussion of what this means, e.g., in what areas will the bar be raised and by how much. Nor is it explained why five tiers are considered optimal. Clear expectations for the consultant are provided. The task assigned to the QuARA is ambitious and has a relatively short timeline, with one year to complete the new ratings and an additional half-year for the OSDE and OKDHS to develop and implement new legislation and regulations. Programs will need to be licensed in order to meet the future minimum quality ratings. Details of how the new system will meet this criterion are not yet developed. Some general goals, activities, and responsible parties are provided. On the other hand, OK has an existing tiered rating system and associated infrastructure, ELD standards, and a draft of tiered professional competencies. This experience forms a basis for next steps which are closer to system revision than system construction. This is a medium quality response with substantial implementation.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	10

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).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(2)

(B)(2)(a): The goal is to have all licensed or regulated ELD sectors participating in the new TQRIS. Currently half of CCDF funded FCCH and CCC participate in TQRIS, along with those Head Start programs that require licensing, and the pilot infant-toddler program. It appears that participation will become mandatory for all state-funded sectors and the goal is that 100% of CCDF, preK, IDEA, and Title 1 programs will participate by 2015. PreK programs in elementary schools with the lowest Adequate Yearly Progress performance will be phased in first. This is an excellent strategy for reaching more Children with High Needs (CHN) within the public schools. OK has a second goal of 75% voluntary participation by Head Start, Early Head Start and tribal CCDF programs by 2015. Since most tribal programs already participate, these goals appear feasible. (B)(2)(b): According to the narrative, OK already has a high rate of child-level participation in universal preK and subsidized, tiered care with no children on a subsidy waiting list. The plan to improve affordability of care describes instead steps to increase the percentage of existing programs participating in TQRIS. It is not clear how increasing program participation will lower costs to parents, as most programs targeted for recruitment (state preK, Head Start, IDEA Part B) are already offered to parents at no cost. No plans are provided to decrease family co-payments. A study of barriers to ELD enrollment for CHN is being conducted. (B)(2)(c): Annual targets for the percentage of ELD programs in different sectors are provided in Table (B)(2)(c). By 2015, targets range from 75% to 100%. Although 96% of CCDF programs are said to currently participate, all programs that meet licensing requirements are assigned to tier 1. Being licensed and actively seeking a higher rating status are not synonymous. Financial differentials for CCDF programs in the top rating tiers are substantial and past history of programs progressing upwards through the current tiers (Appendix 16) suggest that differential reimbursement has been an effective incentive. It is unclear whether Head Start and OSDE programs will receive financial incentives for participating. Strengths of this response include targets for almost complete program participation and a current high rate of participation by

CCDF programs. The major weakness is that the budget sections of this application do not provide a clear picture of how much money is allocated for new incentives and if this will be sufficient to cover the intended number of new participants; thus, funding is a potential feasibility issue. Overall, this is a high quality response with partial implementation.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	8

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

(B)(3)(a): OK will contract with a consultant (yet to be identified) to develop an assessment tool or toolkit by September 2013. This tool will cover all required aspects of the TQRIS, e.g., programs standards, environment and interaction quality, family engagement. The extent to which the new tool will be similar to current monitoring tool(s) is not addressed. Technical specifications for this tool are not provided. Program criteria for meeting each of the new tiers are not provided. OK will pool existing staff in OKDHS (the agency currently responsible for TQRIS monitoring) and the OSDE and train this cadre on the new monitoring process by November, 2013. The number of anticipated monitoring trainees and the exact nature and duration of the training are not described. However, it is indicated that training will address inter-rater reliability, which is a crucial aspect of monitoring quality. The new monitoring process will be piloted in sites from different ELD sectors over a six month period. The pilot will include sectors not currently subject to TQRIS monitoring. OK has a TQRIS monitoring system that will provide a foundation for the new system. OKSDH has 175 licensing specialists, a ratio of 25.78 specialists per licensed childcare facility. These specialists make three or more unannounced site visits per year, which is a high frequency and a sound strategy for obtaining an accurate representation of program functioning. Current TQRIS standards are included in the Appendixes in the form of information manuals for FCCH and childcare centers. The current monitoring tool (or toolkit) is not included in the application. Monitoring includes the use of the Environment Rating System (ERS) observation scale for 2-star level programs, updated every three years. Programs are not required to reach or maintain a particular score on the ERS, which is a weakness in the present system. Three-star programs must have a current national accreditation from a list of approved organizations. OKSDH also has 15 TQRIS Consultants who provide technical assistance and coaching to programs, presumably to programs that are struggling to meet TQRIS standards and/or those that wish to move to a higher quality rating level. The current ratio of 300 licensed programs per TQRIS Consultant suggests that consulting resources are quite limited. Moving to almost universal participation in TQRIS will almost double the number of programs to be monitored. It is not clear how this can be achieved without also doubling the number of monitoring staff. (B)(3)(b): OK will develop a revised on-line system for public access to licensing and quality information. A new TQRIS reporting form will be used to provide uniform information on all participating ELD programs (available in print and electronic form); this form will be developed by December, 2013. The extent to which this new public information system will be similar to the existing system is not addressed. Currently, OK provides licensing, quality ratings, and violation information on all licensed childcare and FCCH programs via the on-line Child Care Locator. No information is provided about how often this system is used by parents and other clients. Participating sites also post their TQRIS ratings on site. In sum, a logical overview plan is provided for the development of a new TQRIS monitoring tool, trained staff, and the public posting of results. Major milestones, such as the dates for having completed the new TQRIS tool and a date for pilot implementation are provided and responsibility for the oversight of this task assigned to a work group to be formed. However, the plan lacks details that could demonstrate potential feasibility. Examples of such details include predetermined levels of measurement quality of the new monitoring tools, how often observational data will be collected, and the future caseload for monitoring staff. OK has an existing TQRIS system including trained monitors and posting mechanisms that provide a foundation for the new plan. This is a medium quality response that is partially implemented.

	Available	Score
(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs	20	14

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

(B)(4)(a): OK currently offers non-credit PD classes, college scholarships, technical assistance, and tiered reimbursement as incentives for TQRIS participation. The number of PD participants (15,348) and hours provided (5,654) by the Office of Child Care Services for the 2011 fiscal year is reported in Appendix 17. Since 4,456 programs currently participate in TQRIS (Table B4c21), these figures suggest that an average of 1.2 staff persons per program received an average of 3.4 annual hours of PD training; this does not appear to be a high level of stakeholder use. Information about use of other supports and incentives is not provided. However, an evaluation report (Appendix 16) indicates that the current support and incentive system is valued by program stakeholders and was key to the substantiated increase in TQRIS participation rates, upward progression of programs to the next higher tier, and increased classroom quality as measured on the ERS between 1999 and 2002. Future plans include a review of the cost effectiveness of current and possible new incentives such as bonuses for attaining each tier and/or enrolling CHN. (B)(4)(b): OK currently offers free, universal preK and tiered childcare tuition subsidies; these appear to be the prime incentives for parent participation. There is a small 0-3 pilot program and efforts to offer "braided" programs that combine personnel and funds from preK, child care, and Head Start to in order to provide higher-quality venues that also operate year-round and full-day to meet the needs of working parents. The number of braided programs is not stated. The fact that 71% of OK children are in universal preK and that there are no waiting lists for CCDF slots suggests that parents of CHN are aware of and make use of available resources. OK's task appears to be more one of raising quality than of attracting additional families. A number of creative, flexible, and family-friendly strategies are under consideration for the future. Examples include increasing program participation in federal food assistance, allowing parents to apply for state health or other benefits at their ELD program sites, grants for communities that provide extended hours through braided programs, and allowing the use of CCDF subsidies for braided programs. At this time, the particular set of strategies is not finalized. (B)(4)(c): Per Table B4c1, OK intends to increase the number of ELD programs in the top TQRIS tiers by 70% during the time of the RTT-ELC grant. The new tier system will also represent a higher bar for quality standards, although new quality standards have not yet been defined. Although the goal of increasing TQRIS participation is ambitious, targets for programs achieving high tier ratings are less so. Per Table B4c21, 46% and 42% of CCDF programs are at current levels 1 and 3, respectively. By 2015, 21% of programs are expected to be in the top three tiers. Of the 7,590 anticipated eligible programs: 423 (6%) will be at the new tier 5; 632 (8%) will be at the new tier 4; 560 (7%) will be at the new tier 3; 1,800 (24%) will be at the new tier 2; 100 (1%) will be at the new tier 1; 1,890 (25%) will be below the new tier 1; and 2,185 (29%) are not accounted for. Ambitious goals are provided for the percentage of CHN who will be enrolled in high-tier programs by 2015 (75-100%). This appears difficult to achieve unless the great majority of ELD programs will be in the top tiers by 2015. "Top-tier" within the new 5-tier system is not defined. Figures in this section relating specifically to CCDF programs indicate that 96% of CHN in this sector are current in top-tier sites. This appears to be inconsistent with information provided in earlier sections indicating that most CHN in CCDF programs are in either current 1-star or 3-star sites. It is unclear whether "top-tier" may be used interchangeably with any rating assigned within the TQRIS. Strengths of this response include increasing the number of rated programs by dramatically broadening the range of programs eligible for TQRIS, planning to serve almost 100% of CHN in top-tier programs, and being open to thinking outside the box when it comes to making programs attractive to families. Weaknesses include lack of clarity about what constitutes top-tier, little detail on the cost and reach of new program incentives, and lack of data on baseline and projected use of PD supports and incentives. OK has an existing support and incentive system and high uptake by CHN and their families so they are at a strong starting place in this particular area. However, it may be difficult to achieve the ambitious goals. Overall, this is a medium quality response that is substantially implemented.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (B)(5)

(B)(5)(a) A past evaluation (Appendix 16) indicated the validity of the current TQRIS system. For example, each successive tier had better-qualified staff, higher use of supports and incentives, and higher ERS ratings. A concern with any TQRIS validation is avoiding circularity. For example, if tiers are defined in part by teacher educational credentials, it should not be surprising that teacher education increases at higher tiers. In the case of the OK validation, ERS scores were used as a dependent variable and found to differentiate star ratings. This is an appropriate example of criterion-related validity, as ERS score thresholds are NOT criteria in the current rating system. A baseline study of current quality across ELD sectors will be completed by the end of 2012. The general content of criterion measures is listed but specific validation instruments and technical quality specifications for these are not. These details appear to be left to the contractor who will conduct this work. The evaluation contract will stipulate stratified random sampling by ELD sector with oversampling as needed to achieve reliable results for each sector, which is a clear strength. A second study will occur in 2014-2015 and will be used to ascertain whether quality has risen within and across ELD sectors. This study is also intended to validate the new TQRIS tiers; however no details of the validation techniques are given. A short-term follow-up component will compare quality of programs that did vs. did not received incentives and/or technical assistance. If pretest matching is adequate, this quasi-experimental design will shed some light on the effectiveness of TQRIS incentives and support on program quality. A third study will be conducted on child outcomes. A consultant will be contracted to collect formative assessment data on individual children in the 2013-2014 school year. Again, a highly desirable stratified random sample of ELD program sectors, tiers, and rural/urban locale will be used. Each child will be assessed four times and suitable controls for demographic characteristics will be used. This is a sound research design that will answer questions about whether and how TQRIS tiers influence children's developmental trajectories. This is medium-high quality response, as quality varies across the three proposed studies.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each 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

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	15	7

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(1)

(C)(1)(a): OK has ELD standards for 0-2 and 3-5 (Appendixes 2 and 3) that were revised in 2011. These standards cover nine "areas" of development. The 0-2 guidelines are divided into three age groupings. The last developmental grouping of 16-35 months is not an uncommon cluster to see in guidelines or developmental charts. However, a wide range of developmental differences can be expected during this age period. The same can be said of the 3-5 year age grouping, which is not sub-divided into yearly increments. Although linguistic and cultural diversity and special needs have a prominent role in the philosophical statement provided in the introduction, there is little coverage in the standards or instructional examples. An exception to this last statement is the social studies area. There is no section specific to dual language learners. It is developmentally appropriate that the 0-2 guidelines have a strong focus on safety and teacher-child relationships. The names of each area tend to be academic, e.g., math, language arts. Despite these labels, the content of the 0-2 standards is developmentally appropriate, e.g. the child using a gesture to indicate "more" is an example of early understanding of the foundations of quantity. Within the 3-5 standards, some areas are more concrete, developmentally sequenced, challenging, and aligned with current disciplinary standards, such as preK math standards of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. The math and language arts standards were strong. Although the names of OK's nine developmental areas are not a close match to the Essential Domains of School Readiness (EDSR), the overall content covered largely meets this aspect of the criterion. For example, many skills related to the EDSR socio-emotional development are included in OK's social studies area. OK standards have few items relating to self care, healthy living, problem-solving, and critical thinking. An independent evaluation of the current ELD standards is not provided. (C)(1)(b): The application states that ELD standards align with K-12 standards and the PASS document (Appendix 1) that is intended to explain OK learning standards to parents does include a preK section. A revision of the K-12 standards is expected in 2014. The ELD standards will be modified accordingly and a consultant will review the new standards for universal appropriateness. (C)(1)(c): The application states that the current ELD standards play a prominent role in program standards, PD training, and curriculum selection. However, this is not strongly evident in the materials provided in the Appendixes, such as the current TQRIS program manual. Workforce Competencies (Appendix 18) include a section on instruction with sub-sections that align with the ELD standards. However, items reflect general instructional strategies (such as engages in frequent conversations with children) and do not address detailed knowledge of expectations for what children of particular ages should know and do. OK currently has no CAS and only limited programs outside of home visiting and Head Start provide screening or formative assessment. Thus, there is no convincing evidence that the ELD standards affect current assessment practices. (C)(1)(d): The application states that ELD standards play a prominent role in PD and that trainers must show that they address these standards. No additional evidence is provided to support this statement. It is stated that the ELD standards will heavily influence the development of all aspects of the future TQRIS, primarily through alignment. Specific details are not provided as to how this alignment will occur. This is a medium quality response and that is partially implemented.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	15	2

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(2)

OK currently has no CAS. As shown in Table (A)(1)-7, there is a striking lack of required assessment in preK and CCDF programs. Two-star CCDF programs are administered the ERS and three-star CCDF programs must administer the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. No information is provided about assessment within the universal preK program. The applicant is clear that this is a self-perceived area of weakness. For this reason, comments will focus on plans. (C)(2)(a): A work group will be formed to make recommendations on instrument selection. (C)(2)(b): An Early Learning Consortium will provide PD on the CAS in the future. Current PD offerings address the ERS and child portfolios and assessment is included in the current Workforce Competencies. (C)(2)(c): A consultant will provide input on how CAS tools align with ELD and K-12 standards. OK will consider having parents give consent for current assessment data to be used in program evaluations. OK has a pilot program relating to sharing data between medical providers and early intervention and child abuse prevention programs. (C)(2)(d): A new Early Learning Consortium will provide training on the new CAS. This response includes very little detail. In essence, the response is that the work all needs to be done and these tasks will be assigned to consultants and work groups. This is a medium quality response that is minimally implemented.

	Available	Score
(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.	15	7

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(3)

(C)(3)(a): Health and safety issues are prominent (but not progressive) in the licensing regulations (Appendix 26) and are also addressed in Workforce Competencies (Appendix 18). These will be addressed in the new TORIS but few details are given. (C)(3)(b): OK has a Warmline that providers can call for information and access to health consultants. \$200,000 for the grant will be used to expand consultant services; this appears to be a modest amount. The new Early Learning Consortium will provide training on health and behavior issues, but few details are provided. (C)(3)(c): The OK Health Improvement plan includes Child Health as a priority and has established recommendations for health-promoting behaviors consistent with current recommendations of major medical associations (e.g., no screen time for children under age 2). The major action for addressing healthful habits appears to be inclusion of the Let's Move Child Care train the trainers program. No information about the expected effectiveness of this program is given. (C)(3)(d): OK has had recent grant-funded initiatives to provide pediatricians with screening tools, to increase referrals in four counties, and to enroll more children in Medicare. In 2010, over 17,000 CHN were screened; this represents about 10% of the total population of CHN reported in Table (A)(1)-1. This appears quite low, however, it is not clear how many additional children were screened as part of routine well baby care. In 2010, 35% of CHN referred for services actually received follow-up treatment; again, this seems low. OK has set an ambitious goal of increasing this last figure to 100%. Reach Out and Read is included in this section; this program provides books and information about reading aloud via pediatric offices. It is not clear how Reach Out and Read addresses health issues. No current data exist regarding CHN who receive regular health care. Future goals address sharing information about health care. Some specific initiatives are described, but the overall impression is one of a patchwork of programs and not a comprehensive health and behavior system. This is a medium quality response with partial implementation.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	15	6

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

- (a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;
- (b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and
- (c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(4)

(C)(4)(a-b): Family engagement is addressed in the current TQRIS and Workforce Competencies, but not in the depth and breadth outlined in this criterion. For example, of the 11 recommended family engagement strategies listed in criterion (C)(4)(a) the current TQRIS system appears to include 2 for FCCHs and 4 for childcare centers. The items listed in Table (A)(1)-9 referring to a "menu" of family strategies do not appear to match the list of required family engagement strategies included in the current TQRIS manuals. OK plans to address all required family engagement strategies in the new TQRIS and strengthen the family partnership section of Workforce Competencies but no details are provided on how this will be done. Instead, the applicant provides the list of 11 recommended family engagement strategies. Mention is also made of the Strengthening Families approach. However, this is not described in detail nor is it explained how this approach is or will be incorporated in the TQRIS and PD systems. (C)(4)(c): Currently, OK appears to have a strong base of home visiting programs, although participation by CHN has decreased 15% since 2007. \$5 million from the grant is slated for family engagement; about half of this will be in the form of outreach of a nature that is not specified. Other than the area of home visiting programs, current practices to support family engagement are not strong. The plan lacks details. This is a medium quality plan with partial implementation.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	20	12
<p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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. 		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(1)

(D)(1)(a-b): OK has Workforce Competencies and a PD ladder. Workforce Competencies are described for five levels, roughly corresponding to skills expected of a provider with no credentials, a CDA, AA, BA, and graduate degree, respectively. The application lists areas of the Competencies by page number that address the required content for this criterion. No independent evaluation is provided for the extent to which this criterion is fulfilled, nor is it clear how the Competencies are used in actual practice. No information is provided as to how competencies are scored, who provides these scores, scoring reliability, and how scores are validated; this is an important area to address. It is not known what percentage of professionals participate in the OK registry. Competencies and credentials will be updated to correspond to the new TQRIS and will be implemented in 2014. (D)(1)(c): Thirty colleges and universities and 80 Career Technology Center sites (most of which are located on college campuses) provide relevant degrees and credentialing. All of these institutions are reported to be aligned with current workforce competencies. Realignment will occur when the new TQRIS is in place. This is a medium quality

response that is substantially implemented.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.	20	8

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(2)

(D)(2)(a): In section (D)(1) it is reported that OK delivered 100,000 hours of PD to 8,500 providers in 2010. It is not clear how this corresponds to the much lower figures provided in Appendix 17 (15.48 hours to 5,654 providers) which appear to represent training delivered primarily by the OKDHS Office of Child Care Services. No estimates are given of the extent to which either current or future PD meets the level of need, e.g., the percentage of all professionals who receive PD in a given year. OK will develop an Early Learning Consortium to align training with the new TQRIS. It appears that the trainers' training will be delivered to the current set of PD providers housed in different state agencies and partner organizations. It is not clear whether additional PD trainers will be hired. A contract will be established to develop new training materials (including on-line training) and a system for tracking training completion. Few details on PD content are provided. There is considerable evidence that stand-alone workshops are not effective in changing teachers' knowledge or practice. On the other hand, extended training that includes required application assignments in the worksite, self-reflection, and coaching or mentoring can be effective. It is not clear what modes of training are/will be used in the present/future PD systems and what degree of follow-up support is/will be provided. Once the system is in place, all state PD funds must be used for training that is aligned with the new TQRIS. (D)(2)(b): OK currently provides recruits and provides scholarships for professionals seeking lower level credentials or an AA degree. There are also pilot programs for a BA degree, student loan reductions, and mentoring to connect coursework with on-the-job practices. Typically 1,000 scholarships are offered at any given time and about 400 credentials are achieved per year. This appears to be a respectable completion rate. Salary supplements of an unknown size are awarded to teachers who complete a credential; during the grant period the number of these rewards will be temporarily increased. Specific information on the number and variety of new incentives and supports is not given. (D)(2)(c): Currently, participation in the PD Registry is voluntary. No estimate of the current participation rate is given. Plans for the new data system will include PD Registry information to allow professionals, employers, and agencies to track PD hours received, credentials, and program performance. Participation will be mandatory for TQRIS participants. Targets for PD registry participation are for an increase of 10% per year, resulting in 43% registration by 2015. It is not clear why this figure is not closer to 100%, as most ELD programs are projected to be part of the TQRIS at that time. (D)(2)(d): The number of aligned institutions of higher education remains stable across the grant. No information is provided about increasing the number of individual PD trainers. Targets for teacher advancement include an annual 5% increase in the total number of credentials or degrees awarded. Not all increases will be equally easy to achieve. For example, due to the nature of the time invested, it should be much easier to increase the number of certificates awarded than 4-year or graduate degrees. The meaning of the "%" column in Table D2d2 is not clear. For example, the number of bachelors degrees between 2012 and 2013 increased by 5%, yet the entry in the % column is 36.12%. This is a medium quality response that is partially implemented.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	12
<p>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--</p> <p>(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(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).</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)
<p>(E)(1)(a): OK currently has universal literacy assessment of kindergarten children using three approved tools. It is not clear whether all three are used with the same child, or whether the school selects one from the approved menu. Teachers enter these data into the K-12 data system and receive training in the use of these tools. It is not clear when assessment occurs and how often it is repeated. (E)(1)(b): A committee will review possible existing assessment tools and provide a recommendation within a six-month window. Preference is for a single tool that can be used in preK formative assessment and kindergarten readiness. The committee will follow a key set of national testing standards. This may be an ambitious undertaking, however it should be achievable since new measures are not being designed and validated. The challenge will be to identify a measure that is valid across content, ages, and diverse groups that also adequately informs instruction and yields quantifiable scores. (E)(1)(c): Once the instrument is selected, a pilot will occur in 2012-2013 in a representative but unspecified number of schools. Training will occur before the school year, data collected in the fall, and analyzed in the spring. The pilot plan appears quite feasible. The quick scale up to full implementation in the next school year may be difficult to achieve. (E)(1)(d): A data system will be developed before the pilot that allows teachers to enter scores into the K-12 database and received reports relating to instructional goals. Since a similar system exists for the current kindergarten literacy assessments, this appears achievable. (E)(1)(e): A seemingly feasible plan is presented to use existing funds. Up to \$1.2 million in existing funds has been allocated to purchase the new tool. Costs of existing tools that may be selected are not provided. This is a logical plan. If a suitable assessment tool is indeed identified, the plan is also achievable. Timelines and expected constituency groups for membership on the assessment committee are identified. Elements of the plan, namely a history of universal kindergarten assessment are in place. This is a medium quality response that is minimally implemented.</p>

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	12
<p>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--</p> <p>(a) Has all of the Essential Data Elements;</p> <p>(b) Enables uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data Elements by Participating State Agencies and Participating Programs;</p> <p>(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;</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(e) Meets the Data System Oversight Requirements and complies with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(2)

(E)(2)(a-b): The applicants are quite honest and direct in describing the limitations of the current state of early learning data systems in OK. The best existing system is the P-12 longitudinal system used by the public schools; however, there is current no method for checking the accuracy of data entry. OK appears to have made a good start in conceptualizing the needed content of a Early Learning Data System and the P-12 system is largely functional in terms of data entry and aggregation (but not reporting and public access). (E)(2)(c-d-e). A pilot is underway to see how well data in the current OSDE, OKDHS, and OSDH records can be matched by child-level identifier. The Data Governance Framework (Appendix 25) and related MOU is a thorough document and the plan addresses key aspects of data entry, security, verification, warehousing, and eventually, public reporting. This is an ambitious and thoughtful plan. Over \$11 million is dedicated to this work and two years are allocated for system implementation and improvement (e.g., software development, actual data aggregation). This is a medium quality response that is partially implemented.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	151

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	7

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (F)(2)

Almost all FCCHs and CCCs including Head Start and Early Head Start are already licensed by OKDHS and 95% of license-exempt tribal programs voluntarily participate in licensing. State preK and IDEA programs are regulated by the OSDE. Home visiting programs are administered, but not licensed by OKDHS. OK has a current TQRIS. FCCH and CCC homes that receive state funding are required to participate in the TQRIS and 50% of these programs are in the top two current tiers. Currently, OSDE programs (OK preK, Title 1, IDEA), Head Start, and tribal child care are not required to participate and it appears that OSDE programs are not eligible to participate. By the end of the grant, almost all ELD programs will be eligible to participate in the new TQRIS and will also be eligible to receive incentives. The mandatory participation of OK preK programs will be phased in over the course of the grant. Participation by other newly eligible ELD programs will be voluntary. Target goals for participation by 2015 range from 75% to 100%, depending on the ELD sector. Home visiting programs, parent-child interaction learning programs, and family, friend, and neighbor care do not appear to be eligible. Overall, if targets are met, it appears that most CHN in the state will eventually be served by programs that are in the TQRIS system. This is a high quality response that is partially implemented.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	No

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 Status 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.

Comments on (P)(3)

OK does not have a current kindergarten readiness assessment and less than 70% of possible points were awarded for (E)(1)

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.	Yes

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.

Comments on Absolute Priority

OK has functioning PD system, a TQRIS with high levels of participation by CCDF programs, and a universal preK system with very high enrollment by CHN. This provides a good foundation on which to build and makes the proposed tasks more readily achievable. The OK application outlines a plan for revising the current TQRIS to meet the criteria included in the RTT-ELC competition. Almost all ELD sectors will be eligible to participate and most sectors will be required to participate by 2015. The three main state agencies and their partners currently involved in ELD programs and regulation will work together on all aspects of the plan. OK addressed all criteria within the Focused Investment Areas, albeit with different degrees of quality. As seen in the points awarded for prior sections, most criteria were addressed with a high or medium quality response and most were partially implemented, with a few areas of substantial implementation. Areas of deficiency included details of the requested budget and CAS, the latter was identified by the applicant as an area of current weakness. Overall, this application meets the Absolute Priority.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # OK-5029

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 10:52 AM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

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

A. Successful State Systems

Table with 3 columns: Core Area, Available, Score. Row 1: (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development, 20, 18. Includes detailed text description of the state's early learning programs and funding.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

The state's financial investments in high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs are outstanding. State funding for the voluntary Pre-K program for 4-year olds has steadily increased since 2004 with \$ 167,245,396 spent in 2011 (A)(1)-4. This program is funded within the state's formula funds for school districts with unrestricted eligibility for the program and no cap on total funding. The public Pre-K program serves 70% of the state's 4-year old population of which about 38% of the children could be defined as Children with High Needs. The state shows evidence in growth in number of Children with High Needs that are supported to participate in Early Learning and Development Programs with growth in the number served by state-funded preschool programs, Part C and Section 619 programs, programs funded under Title 1, and the state pilot early childhood program. In Early Head Start and Head Start, the growth in enrollment of Children with High Needs occurred only in 2010. In programs receiving CCDF funds, there has been a decline in the numbers of Children with High Needs by about 6,000 children since 2007. The long standing commitment of the state to Early Learning and Development Programs is reflected in the state's continued commitment to the voluntary Pre-K program. In addition, the state is noted for its tiered reimbursement system that is tied to quality criteria that results in subsidized children accessing programs of the highest quality. In Oklahoma, the density of subsidized children (38%) is highest in programs at the highest tiers. The state has also allocated \$10 million in state funds that is supplemented by \$15 million in private funds to conduct the Oklahoma State Pilot Early Childhood Program that has created a network of high-quality programs with funding to enhance quality, lower adult-child ratios, provide salary supplements for degree teachers, provide professional development and fund construction projects. The state Department of Health has also invested heavily in supporting families with young children with the operation of two home visiting programs that support nearly 5,000 families. State legislation established the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness board in 2003 that is overseeing a public-private readiness initiative known as Smart Start Oklahoma. The state has many of the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system in place and has identified the gaps in the system where reform is needed. In place are Early Learning and Development Standards, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, a career ladder that is linked to a professional development system, the assessment of literacy skills in Kindergarten, and data

systems within individual programs. The state acknowledges the need to address the following elements in their reform agenda: key elements of a comprehensive assessment system are not in place; data on early educators' progression in the career ladder is not tracked; the Kindergarten assessment is narrowly focused on literacy skills; and the state lacks an infrastructure for cross agency data collection. The score for this section is 18 points.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)

The state has two major goals identified in the state plan: 1) Ensure that all children enter kindergarten ready to succeed; and 2) Increase the number of Children with High Needs who have access to programs that support kindergarten readiness. For each of these goals, the state has provided a rationale and the identification of the elements that are needed to reach identified goals. For example, to ensure that all children enter kindergarten ready to succeed, the state has identified that it must improve its ability to measure kindergarten readiness and implement a comprehensive data system to identify the needs of children and inform instruction. The state has chosen to address all Focused Investment areas because they are all essential to the development of a comprehensive system. While it might seem logical to pursue the development of all Focused Investment areas, the state does not seem to be using their considerable history with the implementation of a TQRIS system and their lessons learned (in particular lessons about the support of Children with High Needs) in being more targeted about their focused investment areas. This might result in each area receiving some reforms, but not resulting in the changes needed to optimally influence the school readiness of Children with High Needs. The state's ambition is to reform their Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System (TQRIS) system so that it is systematic, standardized across all Early Learning and Development programs, and inclusive of elements that are needed to support kindergarten readiness. Their achievable, but ambitious plan will result in increasing the number of programs from 218 that are currently rated as 3-star to 1580 3, 4, and 5 star Early Learning and Development Programs. The comprehensive system includes reforms in the TQRIS to set higher expectations that are tied to school readiness, the provision of support and incentives to programs to participate in the TQRIS, the inclusion of screening and comprehensiveness into the TQRIS, mobilizing resources to meet children's need more effectively, providing training to professionals to build their capacity to serve children better, setting standards for family engagement, and implementing a unified data system. While the state plan that is presented is ambitious and achievable and builds on Oklahoma's notable investments and current status in providing high quality early learning and development programs, the applicant did not discuss how this plan will result in improving the school readiness of Children with High Needs in particular. In Table(A)(1)-2, the State lists children who reside on Indian Lands as a special population of Children with High Needs (164,146 children). However, the state plan does not include strategies or approaches that appear specific to the engagement of families and programs that might support those children. There is also language in the rationale for family engagement that refers to "partnering with interested parents". While partnering with "interested parents" is a critical element of family engagement, including strategies to help families become interested in being engaged is essential to offering effective support to families of Children with High Needs. The score for this medium quality response is 12 points.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	7

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (A)(3)

The applicant has a well-defined governance structure for how the Participating State Agencies and partners will work together and manage the grant. The organizational structure builds on an existing interagency structure (the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness, OPSR) that is connected to a network of local community coalitions. The applicant has provided a detailed description of the role of the Advisory Council (Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness), the relationship to the Lead Agency (Oklahoma Department of Education) to participating agencies, and the major activities/goals for each agency. The applicant generally describes the processes that will be used for making decisions. However, it does not describe how disputes will be resolved. Key stakeholders will be actively involved in the established workgroups of the OPSR board. Staff will ensure that workgroup membership is representative of key stakeholders and parents that represent the cultural and linguistic diversity of Children with High Needs. The commitment of participating agencies to the state plan is articulated through a Memorandum of Understanding and a detailed identification of the scope of work for each agency and the work that will be conducted independently and collaboratively. The applicant has also included a large number of letters of support from broad group of stakeholders. While the letters all express support of the effort, many mention support for the state plan and the aspiration that it addresses a new state policy related to ending the social promotion of children in third grade that fail to meet reading proficiency. Reference to the relationship of the state plan to the law eliminating social promotion appears in many letters, but was not addressed in the proposal in the section describing current status of the State or the rationale for the reform agenda and goals. The gap between the letters of support and the articulated plan raises questions about whether the letters of support reflect a genuine understanding of the state plan reforms. This medium quality response was scored with 7 points.

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

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(4)

The applicant will provide substantial funds to the goals of improving outcomes for Children with High Needs. The state will require the participation of the state-funded Pre-Kindergarten program (serving 71% of the four year olds in the state) in the TQRIS. The state will use 132 million of its funding for Child Care to support the TQRIS. In addition, CCDF Quality Initiative dollars will be dedicated to technical assistance and professional development activities that are fully aligned with the grant. Other state funded programs that provide support to Children with High Needs and their families (e.g., Child Guidance program, Child Care Warmline, Parents as Teachers) will be aligned with the state plan. Smart Start Oklahoma, funded at 1.615 million, will support a network of community coalitions that will support the implementation of the TQRIS, Comprehensive Assessment System, and coordinate training at the local level. The funds requested in the grant are to be allocated to seven major projects: 1) TQRIS enhancement; 2) Comprehensive Assessment System development; 3) development of an Early Learning Data System; 4) Early Learning Consortium for professional development; 5) Strengthening Families; 6) updating Early Learning and Development Standards; and 7) developing a data system. The majority of funds are allocated to the development of the infrastructure and systems reforms that will optimize Oklahoma's investments in Early Learning and Development Programs. It is very difficult to interpret from the proposal how the state will effectively use the funds to achieve the outcomes in the plan. In each agency budget, there are large allocations of funds to general categories with few details on how those funds will be spent. The budget explanations for those funds are generally stated and repeated for each agency. For example, the budget for the Department of Education has 8.5 million to inform and strengthen early learning programs and educators on the comprehensive Early Learning assessment system. In the budget for the Department of Human Services has allocated 5.45 million to training early educators, and parents on the TQRIS, Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment System, and to provide "support structure to families" and the budget for the Department of Health has allocated 2.55 million to training early educators, and parents on the TQRIS, Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment System, and to provide "support structure to families". The state will be investing grant funds in the infrastructure and start-up costs that will improve their ability to provide high quality programs. The allocation of funds to unspecified materials in supplies also appears in the Department of Health budget table at 1.5 million in the first year of the grant. Since the state is currently providing a huge investment in high quality early learning programs that enroll a high percentage of young children, it is expected that the support of Children with High Needs in quality program will be maintained. This response was rated as being medium low quality for a score of 4 points.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	6

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 that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

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

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)

The state began its TQRIS in 1998 for all licensed child care programs and presented evidence that the system can be considered substantially implemented. The current system is linked to licensing, has clear standards and measurable tiers that differentiate program quality levels at three levels. The program provides a tiered reimbursement system that has resulted in the majority of subsidized children attending higher rated programs. While the program has a long history and strong participation, there are key elements that are not included in the current system but will be implemented with the funding of the grant. The state presented a plan to directly link tiers to the Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines, include a ladder of assessments aligned with the Comprehensive Assessment System, an alignment with early childhood educator qualifications, require family engagement strategies, include a health promotion subscale, and participation in a statewide data system. The state has included a plan to renovate the TQRIS to a 4 or 5 star system that will be applied to all Early Learning Development Programs. The redesign of the system will be led by an existing workgroup with representation of all state agencies and key stakeholders. Stakeholder groups and experts that represent the interests of Children with High Needs will be included in the development process. The applicant has presented a plan for the development of the revised TQRIS that will incorporate subscales for each element, a process for reviewing the current minimum quality tier, and a consideration of increasing licensing regulations. A weakness of the state's plan is that they have only described a process that will be used to determine the specific reforms to their TQRIS. Thus, it is difficult to determine exactly what elements will be put in place. In addition, in the description of their process to revise their system, they have not highlighted where the system might need improvements to meet the school readiness needs of Children with High Needs. This section was rated as substantially implemented with a medium quality response and received a score of 6 points.

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

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).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(2)

The state will develop an enhanced TQRIS that will be applied to all publicly funded early childhood programs. Currently all licensed child care program, home providers, and programs receiving CCDF funds are participating in the TQRIS. The state has set the ambitious, but achievable target of having nearly 100% of all publicly funded programs participating in the statewide system by the end of the grant. The state plans to phase in the participation of state-funded preschool programs (including Part B of IDEA) and provide incentives to increase the participation of Early Head Start and Head Start. In addition, the state will seek the participation of Tribal Child Care and Head Start in the planning of the new system to ensure standards are culturally appropriate and provide a greater incentive for tribal programs to participate. The state will pilot its expansion of the system within geographic areas with the highest density of Children with High Needs. The applicant plans to draft regulations for approval by the State Board of Education to establish a phase in plan for participation of school districts in the

TQRIS with a focus on enrolling the lowest performing elementary schools in their initial phases, Oklahoma will continue to provide a generous child care subsidy program to families and through the use of a tiered reimbursement system will continue to ensure that subsidy children have greater access to high quality programs. The score for this section was rated as being substantially implemented with a high quality response and was scored 15 points.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs	15	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

The applicant has a high quality plan for developing the system to monitor the quality of programs through the TQRIS. This plan builds upon the existing monitoring process that is substantially implemented. Once the enhanced system is developed, the state will establish a cross-agency unified rating and monitoring team who will use the standardized system for all programs. The team will be trained through a process of assessing 10 percent of Head Start, child care, tribal child care, and Pre-K programs with at least two monitors assessing sites together to establish reliability. The state will continue to provide information on monitoring visits and the ratings of programs through a website where families and the general public can access information on programs including their ratings, licensing and violation history, and complaint information. Quality ratings are also posted by participating programs. These efforts ensure that parents have accessibility to information about quality rating and licensing, but do not include innovative strategies to provide this information in accessible and understandable ways that will assist families of Children with High Needs to make decisions about programs. This response was rated as being in the low range of high quality and given a score of 12 points.

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

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

The state will continue to implement policies and practices that provide support and incentives for programs to participate in the TQRIS system and seek continuous improvement. An independent review of the current system validated that child care quality was influenced by the TQRIS criteria and that the quality of care was differentiated by the current system. The current system has resulted in some Children with High Needs accessing higher quality programs with only 2% of the children receiving subsidies attending programs on the lowest tier of quality. The tiered reimbursement used by Oklahoma is impressive and shows evidence of its effectiveness in encouraging quality. The state includes action steps in their plan for the review of previous incentive programs to encourage the participation of programs and providers in the quality system and will develop a menu of incentives that can be offered to each program for their participation. In addition, they will design an ongoing bonus program to encourage programs to move to higher tiers of quality. Importantly, the state had indicated the need to identify strategies for sustaining the incentive and bonus program beyond the grant period. The state has provided evidence of their efforts to provide supports to working families by encouraging the collaboration of programs to pool resources and offer full day, full year care to children. The applicant intends to study existing models of collaboration and identify models (and provide startup funds) for communities to implement. Other efforts to support working families of Children with High Needs include an aggressive campaign to improve the provision of free meals to eligible children, assisting families in applying for health and Medicaid benefits with enrollment occurring through their early learning program, and encouraging the expansion of state Pre-K programs from part day to full day in the geographic areas that serve children with the Highest needs. The state has presented an impressive plan that will result in increasing the number of programs in the top tiers of the quality rating system and ensuring that Children with High Needs access those programs. This response was rated as substantially implemented and high quality for a score of 20 points.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (B)(5)

The state has notable history with validating its quality ratings system and has provided citations to a validation study report for center programs (2003) and family child care home validation (2004). The applicant reports that these studies affirmed the ability of the tiered system to differentiate quality and the adequacy of the system to measure quality. In addition, the applicant references several evaluation reports that indicate the current Pre-K program has been found to increase children's readiness for kindergarten and later learning. The state includes a high quality plan to ensure that the enhanced TQRIS developed through this grant will be validated and that a research study to investigate the relationship of quality to children's learning will be conducted. The state intends to employ an evaluation consultant who will conduct a baseline study of quality prior to implementing the new TQRIS and then conduct a validation study at least one year after the new TQRIS has been implemented. The evaluation study will be designed to provide information on the ability of the TQRIS to differentiate quality. This study will be used to make any needed revisions to the TQRIS, monitoring process, and quality incentives. The state will also conduct a study to examine the relationship between measures of program quality and child outcomes. They will contract with a consultant to conduct the study. The applicant will guide the consultant to conduct a study that will be stratified across each sector and include a large and representative sample of early learning programs to measure changes in child outcomes among children who participate in an early learning development program for an entire year. While the state has provided a solid plan to conduct both a validation and outcome study that will yield important data, it did not include additional elements that might provide data specific to the study of the state's population of Children with High Needs and their outcomes (e.g., children residing on tribal lands). The score for this high quality response is 12 points.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each 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

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	15	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(1)

The state has provided evidence of the current use of Early Learning and Development Standards across sectors that cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness. The applicant asserts that these standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group. The standards were developed with input from a wide range of professionals including the Oklahoma Tribal Child Care Association. The standards emphasize the differing developmental rates of children and include information on the importance of ensuring that programs consult families and community members in their use of the standards with children from diverse cultures, children who are English language learners, and children with disabilities. The standards are aligned with the K-12 standards and Head Start Program standards. Oklahoma intends to improve the K-12 standards by 2014. Thus, the state has included plans to ensure the alignment of the early learning guidelines with the new K-3 standards and to conduct a review to ensure that they are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate. Currently all training for child care must be linked to the early learning guidelines. Training is expected to continue and the new TQRIS will also require that all curricula in rated programs will be aligned to the early learning guidelines. The state will be building their Comprehensive Assessment System with the award of the grant and will be ensuring that assessments will be linked to the early learning guidelines. The state currently promotes the early learning guidelines through publications, technical assistance, and professional developmental activities. The state plan includes the development of a public engagement campaign to provide information to parents about the early learning guidelines. However, no specific strategies for outreach to families of Children with High Needs were included in the plan. This response was rated as substantially implemented and high quality. The score for this section is 12 points.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	15	5

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(2)

The state will dedicate a large percentage of their grant funding to the development of a Comprehensive Assessment System. Currently, there is minimal implementation of an assessment system. The system will include the use of screening and formative assessment that will be required of programs participating in the TQRIS. The Comprehensive Assessment System will include a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that will be identified through a process that involves programs and stakeholders. A major concern with the state's presentation of their plan for developing an assessment system is the lack of details on what assessments will be selected, considerations for assessment selection to support Children with High Needs, and a plan to address the challenges that might result in their attempt to move a system from minimal assessment to the use of a comprehensive assessment system. Professional development in the Comprehensive Assessment System will be conducted by the Early Learning Consortium for professional development. Using a cross-agency consortium to provide training to early educators in a standardized format will build consistency in the approach to assessment across programs. The state plans to hire an assessment consultant who will make recommendations on the alignment of the assessment with K-12 assessments and provide recommendations on assessments and tools to support Children with High Needs. The applicant did not provide details on how assessment results will be shared, what procedures might be put in place to avoid duplication of assessments and the coordination of services for Children with High Needs. The applicant refers to previous pilot efforts for the sharing of information and a tool under development for the sharing of student performance data, but was not clear about their implementation steps for data sharing in the support of Children with High Needs. The response for this section was rated as medium quality with minimal implementation for 5 points.

	Available	Score
(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.	15	9

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

- (a) Establishing a progression of standards for ensuring children's health and safety; ensuring that health and behavioral screening and follow-up occur; and promoting children's physical, social, and emotional development across the levels of its Program Standards;
- (b) Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards;
- (c) Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity; and
- (d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who--
 - (1) Are screened using Screening Measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit (see section 1905(r)(5) of the Social Security Act) or the well-baby and well-child services available through the Children's Health Insurance Program (42 CFR 457.520), and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provisions in IDEA (see sections 612(a)(3) and 635(a)(5) of IDEA);
 - (2) Are referred for services based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, received follow-up; and
 - (3) Participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care, including the number of children who are up to date in a schedule of well-child care.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(3)

The applicant currently has a progression of standards for ensuring child health and safety and encourages the referral of children with physical or emotional needs for additional services. Multiple resources are currently available for early educators to provide support to children with specialized needs including child care clinical consultants and the Warmline. In the redesign of the TQRIS, programs will be required to conduct screening and to promote children's physical, social, and emotional development. Grant funds will also be used to expand the cadre of consultants available to programs, contract with personnel to provide mentorship and reflective supervision to providers, and to provide enhanced training to child care consultants. These are important efforts although the funding dedicated to them (i.e., \$200,000) might not be sufficient to meet program needs. The state plan includes professional development for meeting health standards, but does not offer details on the training focus or quality to ensure implementation of practice. In addressing the needs to promote healthy eating habits, nutrition, and physical activity, the state will continue their training in the Let's Move Child Care initiative. The state indicates that this curriculum will be included on all of the Department of Health professional development opportunities, but does not explain a plan for ensuring participation in professional development or the implementation steps for the initiative. The applicant offers a solid plan for expanding the screening of Children with High Needs and ensuring follow-up care to children who are screened. This plan includes the integration of screening into the TQRIS, continued support of efforts to increase the number of physicians who use screening tools within well care visits, participation in a grant to improve developmental screening in high needs counties, the

use of a web based referral program, and providing ongoing technical assistance for developmental screening and promoting school readiness to physicians who primarily serve children eligible for Medicaid Services. However, in the description of the plan the state did not describe how screening measures are aligned with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment program, Children's Health Insurance program, or Child Find provisions of IDEA. The state has included ambitious, yet achievable performance targets for the number of Children with High Needs who will be screened and receive follow-up treatment. This response was rated as partial implementation and medium quality for a score of 9 points.

	Available	Score
(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.	15	6

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

- (a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;
- (b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and
- (c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(4)

The applicant has provided evidence that the current TQRIS system includes standards for family engagement within the quality ratings and will be including additional standards in the new TQRIS that will be developed with grant funds. The applicant intends to develop these additional standards based on lessons learned through their experiences with implementing the Strengthening Families approach. However, the applicant did not provide details on how these indicators would be developed beyond convening a stakeholder group and did not discuss the selection of family engagement strategies that will result in the involvement of families of Children with High Needs. The applicant provides assurance that early childhood educators will receive training in family engagement strategies, but does not provide details on how access to training will occur or the implementation steps for family engagement. The state will leverage its investments in home visiting programs and track the level of family engagement in those programs. The state has a substantial investment in the home visiting programs that currently support 6,000 families. The applicant discusses building on their current implementation of Strengthening Families and the Community and Parent Cafes, but does not offer details about this model and how it will be implemented. Funding will be allocated to a public engagement campaign for outreach activities to families of Children with High Needs, but does not offer information on the nature of those activities or the process that will be used to identify effective activities. The response was rated as partially implemented and medium quality with a score of 6 points.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	20	15

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(1)

The applicant has a set of work force competencies and will be developing a progression of credentials and degrees that will be aligned with those competencies. The state will align the credential system to the new TQRIS system so that progression on the career ladder will have positive consequences for the practitioner and program. The current core competencies meet the minimum expectations for a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. As the state develops the new TQRIS, there is a plan to initiate a review of the competencies to ensure continued alignment. This process will include representation from all program sectors and will involve a consultant who will provide an independent review of the competencies and recommendations for revisions. The plan that applicant has provided for revising the Oklahoma competencies is detailed. However, in the discussion of the competencies there is no mention of ensuring that competencies are included that will help address the unique needs of special populations of Children with High Needs. The applicant previously provided data on the large numbers of young children living on tribal lands that is regarded as a special population of Children with High Needs, but has not mentioned efforts that might be needed to ensure providers have competencies to address these children's needs. The applicant provides a plan for updating the progression of credentials and degrees to align with state competencies and has identified mechanisms for collaborating with community college and university faculty in the development of articulation agreements. This response was rated as partially implemented with a high quality response for a score of 15 points.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.	20	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(2)

The applicant will be creating an Early Learning Consortium that will provide coordinated and competency aligned professional development to all Early Learning and Development Programs. This will ensure that professional development is consistent, aligned to the early learning guidelines, and consistent in the link to the TQRIS. The applicant has provided a detailed plan for the development of the Early Learning Consortium and has included considerations for sustainability in the planning process. The Consortium will provide professional development in ways that will expand access including using web based training modules and offering web based technical assistance and support. The state currently provides many incentives and supports for ongoing professional development and will continue those with the funding of the grant. These include scholarship programs, a loan forgiveness program, and a salary supplement program. The new TQRIS will continue to include salary supplements and use grant funds to provide one-time opportunities to improve credentialing. The state includes in its plan the capacity to develop aggregated reports on the early learning workforce and has described a process for how a public report will be developed and disseminated. In this section, the state has provided evidence that all institutions and professional development providers are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and set reasonable and achievable targets for increasing the number of early childhood educators who progress to higher level credentials. The applicant did not include a discussion of strategies for retention specifically or how retention might be an issue for early educators who provide services to Children with High needs and the role of professional development to improve retention. This response was rated as providing evidence of partial implementation with a medium quality response for 12 points.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows.

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	15

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).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)

The applicant states a goal of statewide implementation of a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) by 2014. This effort will build upon an existing requirement to conduct literacy screening on all Kindergarten children. Since this is a current requirement, the applicant indicates that teachers are accustomed to collecting and entering data from assessments. The applicant provides a detailed plan of the process that will be used to identify a common Kindergarten Entry Assessment and describes their intention to explore options for identifying a tool that can be used in both 4-year old programs and Kindergarten classrooms. This demonstrates the state's commitment to being able to track children's progress and use the data for improving child outcomes. The plan for identifying and implementing the statewide adoption of a KEA includes key stakeholders in the process; the identification of a tool that is reliable, valid, and appropriate; a pilot test of implementation and ability of the tool to assist teachers in offering differentiated instruction to promote child outcomes; and the provision of standardized training to support implementation. The state intends for data from KEA to be entered into the state longitudinal data system. However, that system has not yet been developed and it seems possible that funds might not be secured to develop the system since it appears to be reliant on a pending grant application. The applicant has addressed the criteria to implement the plan for KEA implementation using other funds including funds that have already been set aside from the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness and Department of Education funds for training and supporting teachers to implement KEA. The response was scored as partially implemented with a high quality response for 15 points.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	15

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(2)

The state has presented evidence of their plan to build an early learning data system that can be used to improve instruction and services that is interoperable with a statewide longitudinal data system. The plan for the early learning data system is well-defined and there is a shared agreement among three agencies that defines the vision for the data system and data sharing policies. The plan presented in this section describes the development steps for the early learning data system and activities that have already occurred through the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness Data Systems and Coordination Workgroup to develop a system with all essential data elements. The applicant did not provide details about the plan for ensuring easy entry of data and how uniform data collection might be established. The applicant described work towards identifying how standard data structures can be developed and the desire to have interoperability among the various levels and types of data and describes technical features and components of the system that can be procured or designed. The applicant provides a general intention to ensure the data system will provide information that is timely, relevant, accessible and easy for early childhood educators to use. However, there are few details in the application on the features that will be required of the system that is developed. The state provides its assurance that the new system will meet all Data System Oversight Requirements. The response for this section was rated as partially implemented with a high quality response for 15 points.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	195

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	8

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (P)(2)

The state has provided evidence that their licensing and inspection system covers all programs not otherwise regulated by the state and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children. The state has presented a plan for how they address considerations for tribal programs that are not licensed by the state and the participation of Oklahoma Tribal Child Care Association in the development of the revised TQRIS. The state will include all programs in its new TQRIS. Currently, participation in the TQRIS includes only child care programs and not those programs administered by the Department of Education. Thus, all program participation is only partially implemented. Throughout the proposal, the state has provided a thoughtful plan about how all programs will be encouraged or required to participate and has presented performance targets that ensure participation by the end of the grant period. The response to this priority was rated as high quality and partially implemented for a score of 8 points.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
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Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	Yes
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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 Status 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.

Comments on (P)(3)

While the state is not currently implementing a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) that meets the selection criteria presented in (E)(1), it is currently assessing the literacy skills of all children within Kindergarten programs. This indicates that a culture of using assessments in Kindergarten has been established and bodes well for the state's potential to implement statewide implementation of KEA. In the response, to E-1, the state presented its plan for implementing a KEA.

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.	Yes

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.

Comments on Absolute Priority

Oklahoma has presented a thoughtful plan for building on its current and generous investments in early learning and development programs and increasing the quality of those programs with particular attention to improving outcomes for Children with High Needs. At the heart of the system reforms for the state is the improvement of the state's TQRIS in which all programs will participate. They will integrate all quality elements into the reformed TQRIS with a result of a TQRIS that raises the standards for all programs. Moreover, they will ensure that the vast majority of all programs will be participating in the TQRIS by the end of the grant period. The plan for state reforms to support the provision of a high quality system presented by Oklahoma includes: 1) TQRIS enhancement; 2) Comprehensive Assessment System development including statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment; 3) development of an Early Learning Data System; 4) establishing an Early Learning Consortium for professional development for all sectors; 5) family engagement strategies; 6) updating Early Learning and Development Standards; and 7) developing a statewide data system.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # OK-5029

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 6:58 AM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

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

A. Successful State Systems

Table with 3 columns: Core Area, Available, Score. Row 1: (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development, 20, 16. Includes detailed text description of the core area and sub-points (a) through (d).

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)
(a) Total state funding increased by \$49 million - 13.6% -- from FY 2007 through FY 2011, despite a drop-off during FY 2010 and FY 2011. That drop-off reflected an overall reduction in the state budget due to difficult economic times. The state has shown a commitment to early childhood with the increase to the state budget when other states are looking to cut discretionary programs. Unfortunately, TANF funding has decreased the 3 previous years, but a state pilot program experienced a small increase. Overall, there has been a modest financial investment in early learning and development programs. (b) As a state, Oklahoma continues to enroll more 4-year-olds in state Pre-K than any other state in the country. In 2009-10 Pre-K served about 71% of the population. This is a strength, however nothing more than the home visiting program was mentioned in regard to 0-3 population. Some gain in providing services for 0-3 was realized with the award of ARRA EHS funding. There was a small decrease of children with high needs enrolled in subsidized care. Some of this decrease can be accounted for in response to the economic downturn. (c) The applicant has shown a continued commitment to early learning and development through legislation, policies and practices. The applicant leads the country in the percentage of 4 year old children enrolled in Pre-K and the programs are in 98% of the school districts. This is a strength for the pre-k programming. Further, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) in its 2011 report "We Can Do Better" rated Oklahoma as first in the nation for child care center regulations and second in the nation overall for oversight and regulation. The early learning quality system has been in operation for 13 years, and was noted that they were first to successfully implement an electronic payment system. The Oklahoma Child Care Facilities Licensing Act, The Oklahoma State Pilot Program was created in 2006 to implement high-quality infant and toddler care for at-risk children and families in a range of settings, the Parent Education Program, the early childhood advisory council, are some of the legislation enacted to build policies around early learning. Oklahoma has a rich history in developing and implementing policy. (d) Even though the applicant has early learning guidelines there are no early learning standards across programs. Two of the key areas lacking in the application are implementation of the new K-12 standards which would require to be integrated with the Early Learning Standards, and is missing a Comprehensive Assessment System. Health and family engagement programs are providing services to most home based parents and a wider net would

need to be cast to include a larger part of the population. The state has created a career ladder which is a good tool to track teacher competency, however this is not implemented statewide. In order to continue to create a strong workforce, tools such as the career ladder need to be implemented state wide. The state currently only assesses literacy for kindergarten entry and lacks the current infrastructure to link this data across programs. A good historical policy driven structure, however there appears to have been some disconnect in continuing to forge forward with the early childhood agenda. The score reflects a medium/high quality response.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.	20	10

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)

(a)The applicant provides little support addressing how it plans on closing the readiness gap between children with high needs and their peers. Today, 49% of Oklahoma's first graders do not successfully complete the state's Reading Sufficiency Act requirements for literacy, based on the state's current Literacy Screening Assessment. Increasing the number of programs participating in the upper tiers of the quality rating system does not ensure narrowing of the readiness gap but increases the possibility that children will be enrolled in high quality programs. Since over half of the Oklahoma 1st graders do not successfully negotiate the state reading sufficiency act it was not demonstrated how the state would address this deficit for the 1st graders. No timetable/benchmarks were presented that would document the growth at increasing the reading success in 1st grade. (b)A brief summary of the state plan lacks the criteria that defines it as a High Quality Plan(see definition of high quality plan). The new accountability system will serve as the hub of the state's reform agenda. General information was presented defining the new system and was lacking specificity and a clear defined credible path toward achieving their goals. (c)The state has chosen to address all criteria in support of their plan. Rationale for C 1-4 was very general and not specific as to how it justifies the state choice in addressing each criterion in the focused areas. More information and support is required to justify the selections and how this will support the realization of the state plan. The score reflects a medium/low quality response.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State	10	8

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (A)(3)

(a 1-4) In Oklahoma, the governance process for the Early Learning Challenge Grant begins with strong leadership from the Governor who has an existing advisory body that makes recommendations on strengthening the early childhood system. The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) has also served as the State Early Childhood Advisory Council since 2003 and is charged under state statute and now under federal legislation to make recommendations to the Governor on early childhood issues. The lead agency for the grant is the Oklahoma State Department of Education and the State Board of Education. Building on the past success of the state program, the Department of Education will provide strength in leadership for the project. The grants organizational chart was presented pictorially with the governor's office being involved on the fringe. Clearly the Department of Ed will provide programmatic and fiscal management. A process of how Part C of IDEA will be represented in the process was not stated. Part C and IDEA are key partners in providing services to the early childhood community that was overlooked and/or not mentioned. The governance structure will build upon the current structure and most decisions reported will be made jointly. The state is looking outside to bring in a consultant to set up the governance structure. The time it will take an outside consultant to become familiar with the overall system and the changes proposed could delay the implementation of the plan. (b 1-3) Binding agreements and copies of MOUs included with 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; "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 ELDPs that become Participating Programs; and A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency were included in the application. (c 1-2) A broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in the selection criterion with detailed and persuasive letters of intent and support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, local early learning councils, and many other stakeholders was included in the application. It was clear of the scope of support for the proposal. The score reflects a medium/substantially implemented response.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.	15	9

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(4)

(a)The applicant failed to demonstrate through the narrative and/or budget tables the use of existing funds and how they would support the early learning effort. Throughout the budget tables zero dollars were listed in reference to other funds used supporting the effort. Funds were referenced in table A4-1 however no detail and/or narrative on how the funds would be used was demonstrated. The fact that the budget did not reference other dollars being leveraged to support the state plan makes me question the commitment of the state to realizing their stated plan. Dollars were presented in the table but not supported by narrative. (b 1-2)The budget narrative and the budget tables do present how the state will attempt to implement their plan. It was stated throughout that the state needs to create an infrastructure to carry out the plan so a large amount of the dollars will go to support this effort. The dollars allocated will definitely support the creation of the infrastructure however a plan is not presented on how to increase the participation within the system. The state already has a quality rating system and a substantial amount of dollars are being spent to increase the TQRIS system ratings. The figure seems large for this criterion (11 million). Also noted throughout was the hiring of new staff to implement much of the plan. (3) There is detail of 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. There was not a strong demonstration of a significant amount of funding that will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan. Also the amount of funds set aside for technical assistance seemed low (\$400,000) considering the development the programs will require moving forward. It was unclear of the amount of dollars to be used to sustain the project as it moves forward. Included in this will be the sustainability of the staff hired throughout the years of the grant. The score reflects a medium quality response partially implemented.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	6

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 that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

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

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)

(a)The quality system presented builds upon the current quality system that has been in place. The historical success and existing framework provide a strong foundation for Oklahoma to develop a system that is both broader in its participation and deeper in its power to drive quality improvement. The system has all of the required standards. The Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines will be embedded in the quality rating and improvement system, and the ability of programs to successfully implement the Guidelines will be a key determinant of the program's rating level. The current TQRIS does not require comprehensive assessments, but Oklahoma's new design will ensure that best practices in early childhood assessments are implemented widely. The current Pre-K program requires teachers to have bachelor's degrees and specialized early childhood training and it is proposed that the upper two tiers of the system will require a Master's level teacher for every 30 children. Currently, programs that participate in QRIS must implement parent involvement strategies that promote parental awareness of resources and communication between parents and providers. Requirements are tiered and begin at the second lowest tier. At the second lowest tier, centers must offer eight parent involvement strategies, including parent conferences, parent resource area, newsletters, and parent participation in program planning. To reach the next two tiers, programs must also provide a written report at the annual conference and assist parents in connecting with community resources. Also, Oklahoma's current QRIS requires all participating programs to meet licensing standards, including compliance with health and safety, safe outdoor play and healthy meals provisions. When the project is complete, all publicly-funded programs will be expected to participate in the statewide early childhood data system, how this will be implemented was not presented. The plan is to strengthen and build upon the system already in place. (b)A five star system will be a measurable and meaningful way of differentiating the quality of programs. The criteria of the rating system are cross walked with the standards of NAEYC, Head Start and environment rating scales. This was not clear on how the standards are used to differentiate quality. A consultant will be hired to work through the QRIS process. The state created the first rating system in the country so it has some knowledge with regard to system implementation. (c)The new system will be linked to the licensing system and actually broaden the scope to include all licensing agents will adhere to some type of quality rating. The score reflects a medium quality partially implemented response.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	15	9

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).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(2)

(a)By including the once exempt school based programs the plan is attempting to include all the ELDPs in the tiered quality system. By leveraging the authority of the State Department of Education statewide participation of the ELDPs can be achieved. This possibility will increase the quality across programs. All of the following will participate in the TQRIS; State-funded preschool programs; Early Head Start and Head Start programs; Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA; Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program. (b)A policy strength that helps families afford the quality care is by providing incentives to those who are serving high needs children. Another strength of the system is the fact that eligibility for subsidies typically takes 48 hours or less which enables families to access care quicker. Families have quicker access to services Another strength of the system is the tiered reimbursement system that supports quality in programs. (c)The state has set very ambitious goals for numbers and percentages that will participate in the TQRIS. Based on the experience of the state the goals are ambitious and achievable. The score reflects a medium quality and partially implemented response.

	Available	Score
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(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs

15

9

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

(a)Monitoring the quality of programs is essential to the state's goal of increasing the capacity and participation of high needs children in high quality early learning and development programs. The development of a unified suite of rating tools will be part of the design and implementation of the new QRIS, however the particular rating tools are not identified. The identification of the tools is a key component of the plan and should be identified before selection. Trained monitors are used reliability is checked through training and standardization of work processes. Three visits a year to monitor may become challenging given the number of current licensing reps (175) employed by the state. (b)The applicant speaks to developing strategies of providing information to parents but it is not quite clear on how these strategies will be implemented. Quality rating information will be posted at sites was one method, this is not new. However, a P20 Data portal will offer a single entry point to find Quality rating information and make comparisons across programs, not everyone has access to technology. It was mentioned that the state will build upon current systems but no mention was made of these systems. The score reflects a medium quality and partially implemented response.

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

Available

Score

20

12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

(a) Oklahoma's child care program presently offers significant incentives for programs to improve quality. The tiered CCDF reimbursement pays high premiums to top tier programs, and Oklahoma's quality incentives for training and development for the child care workforce support ongoing quality improvement. The quality incentives for training and development for the child care workforce also support ongoing quality improvement, which is a necessary companion to program improvement. The use of incentives provides an appropriate way for programs to strive for quality programming. The incentives for subsidy children also provide an opportunity to serve high needs children. (b)Subsidy policies will be reviewed to see if there are ways of removing potential roadblocks to helping working families access programs they need. Consideration of reducing co-payments will aid families with care. (c)-2) Oklahoma has set ambitious goals for increasing the number of providers achieving high ratings. It will also increase the number and percentage of children with high needs served by the highest-quality providers. The applicant does not outline in a high quality plan how this will be achieved. However, Universal Pre-K aids in reaching out to a high needs population. The score reflects a medium quality and substantially implemented response.

	Available	Score
(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.	15	9

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (B)(5)

(a) Program measures will include at a minimum: group size; staffing ratios; staff compensation; staff qualifications; practices to promote assessment, health, family engagement, and effective collection and use of data; extent to which programs incorporate the Early Learning Guidelines; environmental ratings; staff assessment of quality and concerns; and family assessment of quality. These measures will be compared with measured outputs of the programs. Specific research based measures were not readily identified. (b) It is unclear from the information presented how changes in the quality rating systems are related to child outcomes. The applicant will use this opportunity to make the connection between program quality and outcomes. Specific information on how this will be accomplished was not demonstrated throughout the proposal. The score reflects a medium/high quality response.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each 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

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.	15	8

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(1)

(a)A statement was included 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. No information on how the standards were culturally and linguistically appropriate was presented. Just a general statement no support provided. (b)In developing its Early Learning and Development Standards, Oklahoma has worked to ensure alignment with K-3 academic standards, particularly in early literacy and mathematics. Oklahoma's learning standards are known as the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS), and they include Pre-K standards as well as K-12 standards. During the revision of the Early Learning Guidelines for Children Ages 3-5, a process was conducted to ensure these guidelines were aligned with the PASS for literacy and mathematics. The applicant is also committed to implementing new K-12 standards by 2014 to improve the rigor of college and career readiness. Accordingly, it will be critical to review the Early Learning Guidelines to ensure continued alignment. (c)The new TQRIS system will require that curricula selected be aligned to the early Learning guidelines. This will help in standardizing some of the curriculum being used. The curricula and activities used by Oklahoma Early Learning and Development Programs are based on the Early Learning Guidelines, through a series of requirements in the individual programs. The new QRIS system will require that in all rated programs, the curriculum selected and implemented must be aligned to the Early Learning and Guidelines. The applicant will build the new comprehensive assessment system so the standards will be linked. It is also creative that the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and professional development efforts are based on the Early Learning Guidelines. The practice of not approving child care training until the trainer demonstrates how the training will address at least one of the early learning guidelines is a beginning to standardize professional development. (d)The applicant provides a few opportunities to promote the understanding and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs. Strategically Oklahoma will develop a cross sector professional development training plan that will support an understanding of the Early Learning Guidelines, which will be implemented as part of the Early Learning Consortium for professional development. The score reflects a medium quality and partially implemented response.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.	15	8

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(2)

(a)General information is presented by the state about working with Early Learning and Development Programs, however specific information on how this process will work is missing. Elements of a high quality plan are missing as well. A strength noted for this plan was the use of the myriad of stakeholders who will work to develop the assessment system. To date, Oklahoma has not developed a strong infrastructure in this area, and there are many gaps between the definition of a Comprehensive Assessment System and current Oklahoma practice. (b)A centralized approach will be used in 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. A new group will be formed (the Early Learning Consortium) to oversee this mission. The applicants commitment to the Early Learning Challenge is to fully implement assessments that meet all of the requirements of a Comprehensive Assessment System. (c)An approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results was very general information. The selection of assessment tools by the Department of Education in conjunction with the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness, through a process that will also include the development of a Kindergarten Entry Assessment. Elements of a high quality plan are missing. (d) Training for Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessment and interpret and use assessment data will be provided by the Early Learning Consortium for professional development. The training will include follow up, however Elements of a high quality plan are missing. The score reflects a medium quality and partially implemented response.

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

15

8

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(3)

(a)The state has provided a plan identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness. The Oklahoma Health Improvement Plan (OHIP) outlines three flagship issues: Obesity Reduction, Tobacco Cessation, and Child Health. The Child Health Plan encompasses all aspects of children's health (i.e. immunization, oral health, nutrition) including mental health. The applicant has developed a progression of standards for ensuring child health and safety as licensing requirements provide the foundation of the current quality rating and improvement system. However, the plan does not meet the definition of a high quality plan as defined by the application. (b)Oklahoma already has underway specialized efforts to support Early Childhood Educators in ensuring that health and developmental needs are being met for Children with High Needs. The current child care consultation network and High-quality training for Early Childhood Educators will be provided going forward through the Early Learning Consortium for professional development. No specificity in this plan was provided. (c)In 2008 the Oklahoma Legislature required through SJR-41 that the State Board of Health develop a comprehensive health improvement plan. The Oklahoma Health Improvement Plan (OHIP) was developed with input from leaders in health, business, tribes, non-profits, private citizens, state legislators, labor, academia, state and local governments and professional organizations. The mission of OHIP is a general improvement of the physical, social and mental well being of all people in Oklahoma through a high-functioning public health system?. The three key flagship goals are: Tobacco Use Prevention, Children's Health, and Obesity Reduction. The applicant further notes committed to improving the eating habits, nutrition, and physical activity of its young children by joining the First Lady's Let's Move Child Care initiative. (d&1-2)The applicant's commitment is to leverage existing resources to improve the number of Children with High Needs who are screened, who receive follow-up services, and who participate in ongoing health care. This effort will be supported by the quality rating and improvement system, which will measure the ability of programs to do screening and ensure the follow-up -- and rate them on that ability; through the Workforce Competencies, which will ensure that personnel are able to carry out this work; and through its new data system, which will be designed to support the process of conducting screening and referral by allowing for screening results and referral needs to be shared more easily among appropriate providers. (3)No data was provided in the table to reference the number of children currently up to date in a schedule of well-child care. The key goals and key activities for each criterion can be identified, but how the elements will be scaled up over time, a realistic time-frame, milestones, how the state will address the needs of different types of early learning programs is not identified in the plan. Very general information is presented on what they will attempt to implement, but not all the pieces required to get there. The plan is not specific to how it will achieve improvements to school readiness. It is apparent that many agencies are involved in the effort to expand early learning programs. Using existing resources to meet goals was evident. The score reflects a medium quality and partially implemented response.

(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.

Available

Score

15

8

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

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

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

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

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(4)

(a)The applicant already has some standards of family engagement related to the new QRIS system. Some of these strategies are already practiced in programs. Currently includes family engagement in its quality ratings. The new quality rating and improvement system will continue to require programs to engage families, and where appropriate draw connections to other programs and services that can meet additional needs families have. In addition, the new workforce competencies will require professionals to have the skills needed to properly engage families. The plan presented is missing many of the elements that define a high quality plan. (b) Early Childhood Educators will use best practices that will be imbedded in the workforce competencies. The plan is not specific on how it will increase the number and percentage of professionals trained and supported on an on-going basis. (c)The plan does leverage other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers. The strengthening families initiative has created Community and family Cafes. This series of structured small group conversations brings parents together to discuss issues important to them. The goal is to directly engage parents in building the protective factors needed to prevent maltreatment and promote healthy outcomes for their children. Good program for family engagement. The score reflects a medium quality and partially implemented response.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.	20	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(1)

(a) Oklahoma has already developed a set of workforce competencies to promote learning development and improve child outcomes. This will develop a progression of credentials and degrees tied to the competencies, creating a clear path for early childhood educators to receive recognition for improving their knowledge and skills. Those credentials and degrees will also be tied to the state's new tiered quality rating and improvement system, so that obtaining higher-level credentials and degrees will have direct positive consequences for early learning personnel and the programs that employ them. No specific plan is mentioned to address child outcomes. (b)There is a progression of credentials presented and in the new system, credentials and degrees will lead to specific positive consequences, creating an incentive for personnel to obtain them. The applicant is fortunate to build on a strong base of aligned credentials and degrees, which can provide a starting point for the important work of meeting new and raised expectations. In 2010, Oklahoma became the first state to offer a teaching credential for individuals working with infants, toddlers, and 3-year-olds, also known as the IT3. The IT3 Certification track is for individuals who hold a Bachelor's degree in the area of Child Development or Family Relations with an emphasis in the development of infants and toddlers through age three from a regionally accredited higher education institution recognized by the Oklahoma State Board of Education. It is noted that the elements of a high quality plan are absent. (c) Oklahoma's professional development providers and post-secondary institutions have already shown a strong commitment to providing professional development aligned with the existing competencies. That commitment will only be strengthened with the implementation of the new competencies and tiered quality rating and improvement system, which will demand higher levels of quality from all providers. Building on its existing base, Oklahoma will continue to integrate its professional development providers and post-secondary institutions

as it builds its next-generation professional development system. There is a strong commitment from secondary institutions. Elements of a high quality plan are absent. The score reflects a medium quality and partially implemented response.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.	20	10

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(2)

(a) To support high-quality professional development aligned to the Competencies, Oklahoma will create the Early Learning Consortium of Oklahoma to provide leadership, professional development, and expertise to support early childhood practice. The Consortium will organize potentially disparate efforts to create a matrix of professionals with expertise in early childhood practice – including the successful implementation of standards, assessment, health and developmental needs, family engagement, and more. Another support will provide to programs later in 2011 is the Oklahoma Professional Development Registry, which will provide a web-based searchable database of registered training events that can be used by all early childhood providers. (b) The new tiered quality rating and improvement system will provide incentives and supports for high-quality professional development, building on many of the incentives and supports already provided. A mentoring program is looking to be started up as well. This will be a good support to new professionals. Training voucher credits are also a nice incentive. (c) The Oklahoma Registry staff processed 3445 applications last fiscal year. The Registry issued 2,385 certificates: 889 Oklahoma Directors Credentials and 1,496 Professional Development Ladders. Registry participation is voluntary, so it does not provide a complete picture of the early childhood workforce. When the quality rating and improvement system is implemented, all participating programs will be required to report workforce information, to create a stronger database for better analysis and to inform ongoing strengthening of the state's professional development system. A registry will be completed by the end of the grant period, but how the project proceeds was not explained. (d) It was unclear which institutions aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. The score reflects a medium quality and partially implemented response.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 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 under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.	20	12

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).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)

(a & b) Oklahoma will work collaboratively with its stakeholders and leading experts to ensure that it has in place a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) that meets all of the grant standards – and, most importantly, can be administered effectively by teachers. Stakeholders and committee members will work Ensuring alignment with the Oklahoma Early Learning Guidelines and Studying research about the candidate tools to ensure that they can be valid, reliable, and appropriate for Oklahoma's kindergartners and the purposes for which the assessment will be used. This method will ensure a kindergarten assessment that is common across programs. (c) Pilot sites will be selected by January 2013 and subsequent statewide implementation during the 2014-15 school year. (d) The applicant has a vision for systems to be linked across programs. There is currently not a system in place. This is conducive to aggregating data but only a general plan was presented. (e) There are already funds set aside to implement this plan. The State Dept. of Ed also has some funds for the data system. The Department of Education will designate existing funding to develop a training plan and to provide ongoing support following the grant period for Kindergarten teachers. The department will support training for new teachers on how to administer the KEA and how to enter the data into the state-wide data information system. The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) will contribute up \$950,000 with an additional \$250,000 from Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) for the purchase of the KEA, as well as for the purchase of instruments and to provide additional training materials once the KEA has gone to scale for the entire state. Elements of a high quality plan not demonstrated. The score reflects a medium quality and partially implemented response.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.	20	12

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(2)

(a)Oklahoma would like to implement an early learning data system that captures all of the essential data elements required by the grant. They have a current P12 system that needs up graded to include the early learning information. Work groups were created to drive the cause of creating the system. Because Oklahoma lacks an integrated multi-agency P20 longitudinal data system, they have significant and persistent challenges to overcome, especially with regard to the linking of Early Learning data between agencies. (b)The current system needs to be upgraded, budget dollars are included to fund the project. Beginning in the fall 2011 and continuing through the spring 2012, the OSDE will pilot a more robust and periodic data certification process to ensure that the data system is accurate and true. In addition, with the development of the new P20+ Education Data Portal, described above, OSDE will allow teachers, school leaders and service providers to access the state data system with expended collections and reporting tools. (c)The Data Systems and Coordination Work group has begun exploring the potential within existing systems to link data across agencies. Using the names, demographics and unique student identifiers, the Education, Health and Human Service agencies have tested our ability to match data. They are attempting to link data across agencies. Lots of general information provided and no specifics on how when it will be completed (d)The applicant is pursuing a multi-track approach to gathering input from stakeholders across the state to ensure that decision-makers are informed by actionable data that leads to improved outcomes for students: To date planning for the P20 Education Data System has included conversations with an array of stakeholders through the P20 Data Coordinating Council, and similar conversations have been held through the Partnership for School Readiness. In addition, the OSDE has taken two key steps to organize itself to support its central role in the design and development of the P20 Education Data System: the formation of the REAC3H Network and the establishment of a formal data governance process within the OSDE. Stakeholders will also have access to data, analyses and reports from the six agencies posted to or linked through the P20+ Education Data Portal. (e)The mission of the Early Learning Data Governance Committee as stated in the Oklahoma Early Learning Data Governance Framework is to establish policies and provide guidance related to the management of the Early learning Longitudinal Data System (ELLDS) consistent with the vision and direction of the Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness.? While the policies to not yet exist to address the specific Data System Oversight Requirements listed in the RTTT-ELC RFA, the Early Learning data agencies have committed through the MOU and will work through the Governance Framework to create the policies and procedures that do meet these requirements. The score reflects a medium quality and partially implemented response.

	Available	Score
Total Points Available for Selection Criteria	280	166

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority 2: Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	10	6

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.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (P)(2)

(a)The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) is charged with licensing center- and home-based care. All centers are licensed, regardless of the number of children in care. Exemptions are available only for programs operating 15 hours or less per week, during typical school hours by a public or private school that offers elementary education from kindergarten through third grade, and facilities on tribal country land or federal property. Head Start and Early Head Start centers are required to be licensed unless they meet one of the exemptions above. Except for programs Oklahoma is excluding from this project, all center- and home-based ELDPs are state-licensed or regulated with the exception of ten or fewer tribal facilities. The presentation failed to include how it will increase specifically high needs children using quality early learning. (b) At the conclusion of the grant period, Oklahoma will include all programs in its new QRIS. These providers will be encouraged to continually improve quality ratings and to achieve higher tiers in the QRIS through a coordinated strategy of financial incentives to improve, technical assistance, bonuses for achieving higher tiers, and evaluation and consideration of restructuring program funding to provide incentives for both programs and parents to seek higher quality. The applicant will improve the TQRIS system across boundaries.

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry	0 or 10	No
<p>To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--</p> <p>(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or</p> <p>(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.</p>		
Comments on (P)(3)		
(a)Kindergarten assessment only addressed Literacy. (b)Applicant did not receive at least a 70% on (E)(1)		

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.	Yes
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	
Comments on Absolute Priority	
<p>The applicant has shown a continued commitment to early learning and development through legislation, policies and practices. The applicant leads the country in the percentage of 4 year old children enrolled in Pre-K and the programs are in 98% of the school districts. This is a strength for the pre-k programming. Further, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) in its 2011 report "We Can Do Better" rated Oklahoma as first in the nation for child care center regulations and second in the nation overall for oversight and regulation. The governance process for the Early Learning Challenge Grant begins with strong leadership from the Governor who has an existing advisory body that makes recommendations on strengthening the early childhood system. The Oklahoma Partnership for School Readiness (OPSR) has also served as the State Early Childhood Advisory Council since 2003 and is charged under state statute and now under federal legislation to make recommendations to the Governor on early childhood issues. The lead agency for the grant is the Oklahoma State Department of Education and the State Board of Education. Building on the past success of the state of education provides strength in leadership for the project. The quality system presented builds upon the current quality system that has been in place. The historical success and existing framework provide a strong foundation for Oklahoma to develop a system that is both broader in its participation and deeper in its power to drive quality improvement. The system has all of the required standards. The plan is to strengthen the system already in place. A five star system will be measurable and a meaningful way of differentiating the quality of programs. The criteria of the rating system are cross walked with the standards of NAEYC, Head Start and environment rating scales. This was not clear on how the standards are used to differentiate quality. A consultant will be hired to work through the QRIS process. The state created the first rating system I question the use of funds for this when it is apparent there should be talent available to continue this work. The new system will be linked to the licensing system and actually broaden the scope to include all licensing agents will adhere to some type of quality rating. The focused investment areas were addressed not through a high quality plan as defined by the application but in a thoughtful manner attempting to improve upon the quality of the early childhood program.</p>	