



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # WV-5036

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]  
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]  
Support Monitor: [Redacted]  
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**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

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

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

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

**Comments on (A)(1)**

The applicant provided strong evidence that the state spending on Early Learning and Development programs began ten years ago and is significant and continues to grow. The State has provided evidence that funding since 2007 has grown from \$47 million to almost \$79 million in 2011. This has generated growth in accelerating the accessibility of Pre-K programs for young children. The State has research demonstrating it has met 8 out of 10 of the National Institute for Early Childhood Research quality standards benchmarks contributing to the evidence of quality for Pre-K children. The case for the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development programs is not as strong with evidence not supported in the tables. Table evidence does not clearly identify the number of Children from Low-Income families as a percentage of all children in the State as all age groups individually are listed as 52.6%. Further the evidence provided was unclear as the State also listed percentages of Children from Low-Income families as a percentage of all children in the State for those enrolled in Part B and Part C, Title I, ESEA in the thousands. Evidence provided shows decreasing numbers of children with disabilities participating in programs and funding decreasing for this population as well. No information was provided to explain these decreases. Existing Early Learning and Development legislation, policies, and practices are strong for children in Pre-K but still developing for infants and toddlers. Evidence was not provided as to why this population has not been previously addressed or the rationale for beginning with Pre-K. The applicant is in the process of developing Early Learning and Development Standards for infants and toddlers which is an area of need. Current health promotion practices are in place but need to be more fully implemented which the State has addressed. At this time, the applicant did not provide data on uniform Kindergarten Entry Assessments, the status of children entering Kindergarten, quality of current Early Learning and Development Programs or effective data practices. Overall, the State has allocated significant state funds to a Pre-K system but failed to provide sufficient information to document the number of low income children in the State, who they are, where they are, or what other populations constitute Children with High Needs. This lack of data is also evident in the lack of information on the status of children entering Kindergarten and the quality of their existing Early Learning and Development Programs.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.</b>	20	14

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's 10 year history of providing Universal Pre-K and financial investment demonstrates the State's commitment to early learning. They currently have a program that has received positive evaluations and serves as the building blocks for their current proposed efforts. Their demonstrated success with models for serving children 3-5 serves as a strong foundation for them to build downward to infants and toddlers. The applicant's articulation of their State's rationale for its reform agenda was not convincingly supported by data. Evidence was not provided for a comprehensive reform agenda that supported an aligned and coordinated system of high quality Early Learning and Development programs serving Children with High Needs across the state. The State provided some evidence that it had certain pieces in place but not a clear and credible path towards achieving goals that were not always aligned. Evidence was not provided that explained how the state intended to close the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers or a specific rationale for why selected criteria were chosen other than the state lacked them. This is the case in choosing childcare to focus funding and attention on. While the State identified that this was an area they currently lacked, providing information on aligning their efforts in this area with existing programs was not provided. The plan did not articulate a clear and connected plan where each part combined together to create ambitious and achievable goals.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State</b>	10	5

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 Early Childhood Advisory Council of WV (ECAC) will act as the Lead Agency responsible for oversight of all grant activities and funds. This agency has been successful in developing their universal Pre-K system. The applicant did not provide clear descriptions of the governance structures or how the ECAC is in a position to facilitate the activities of the grant other than establish an office within this structure to manage grant-funded activities, including hiring a 1FTE coordinator and 1 FTE administrative assistant. More specificity is needed to describe how this office within an agency is new, doesn't duplicate services, and is sufficient to address the interagency coordination that is needed for a project of this scope. The applicant states that the Early Learning Challenge activities will be seamlessly absorbed into the ongoing work of the existing advisory council but doesn't articulate role, responsibilities, timelines, etc of participants on the council including those from a broad group of stakeholders. Some MOU's were provided but a coherent, detailed "Scope-of-work" descriptions were not presented. The MOU's provided some evidence of support and it is clear that some agencies fully support this endeavor but commitment to the State Plan was not provided in letters of support from colleges, universities, parent organization, state and local leaders and family and community organizations. The letters that were provided were not in sufficient enough detail to provide evidence that they themselves were persuaded this plan could be implemented fully. It is still unclear how key stakeholders, including parents will be included in decision making processes. The methods for decision-making and dispute resolution regarding RTT-ELC funds will follow the bylaws of the Early Childhood Advisory Council. These bylaws state that every member of the Council will have one vote. While this is sufficient in some situations and admirable for stakeholder input, more detail is need for resolving high-stakes disputes or when parties are unable to effectively participate.

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

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 budget had discrepancies about who would be funded to perform tasks and some sections of the budget did not align. In particular, there was missing information on how to fund specific projects and the use of existing employees to conduct the work of the grant. The budget does not seem adequate to support the development and implementation of professional development activities and training in the areas of Infant and Toddler programs. \$379,000 are budgeted to support the development of new credentials and online supports but funds are not used to support individuals or access to the new career lattice. The applicant states that state funds will continue to support the Pre-K system, and this can support the existing programs. Information regarding the sustainability of other program components are not provided. Significant dollars are allocated to the TQRIS system but this doesn't seem to leave enough for the other components of the system. The applicant states that the playgrounds built will continue to exist and the state has a history of continuing programs is not sufficient evidence to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs can continue to be served. The State budget does not specifically address which groups of Children with High Needs are targeted with specific dollars.

**B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs**

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>

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)**

The applicant has legislation and an implementation plan for a tiered QRIS for licensed child care. This existing system provides a starting place for the State to build upon and they have begun drafting plans to extend downward towards younger children. Currently, the State has a four-star rating system representing four tiers of quality standards and a building block method, requiring programs to meet all requirements of lower tiers before moving up. Requirements of one star are basic license requirements and are mandatory for all centers, participation beyond one star is voluntary and four stars requires national accreditation. The State does not adequately address how it will provide incentives for programs to move beyond one star in a voluntary system. The State doesn't address how it will engage families to participate in the system at any level. The existing TQRIS currently does not include a Comprehensive Assessment System or effective data practices. The applicant does not have health promotion practices or Early Childhood Educator qualifications that are implemented. Specifics are not provided regarding screening and inclusion for children with special needs. The lack of this information does not provide a method for the State to adequately identify or address the needs of Children with High Needs.

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

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 claims that families of Children with High Needs will have increased access to high-quality programs through access to an expanding supply of high-quality programs and the ongoing improvement of existing programs. What the State fails to provide is baseline data on target numbers for participation for any programs other than CCDF. There is no information in the application to explain why this information is not provided. In this application, families will learn about the importance of high quality care through the public information campaign. It is in this campaign that families will get information on how they can apply for subsidies, and how to obtain quality ratings for child care in their local programs. It is not clear how this information will be transmitted or how families are to use this information. The State intends on contracting with a public relations firm to advocate for the need for quality programs but doesn't provide information on how this will be accomplished. Because the plan does not specifically address barriers to participation by providers and families, such as affordability, transportation, etc. it does not address whether families can afford these programs. Similarly, no data is provided on the numbers of specific Children with High Needs currently in different tiered programs so it's unclear what the targets are for the numbers of children in TQRIS. The plan focuses primarily on Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the state's CCDF program and falls short of ambitious targets. Again, it's unclear what the baseline data is and where the State intends to go. This is particularly necessary in understanding the overall need for reform and why some programs were or were not addressed.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs</b>	15	10

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 reports that monitoring the quality of programs will vary according to program type. This individuality is promising and they have chosen excellent tools for evaluation, including the use of a self-assessment. Family child care homes will be evaluated using the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scales, Revised Edition (FCCERS-R); child care centers will be evaluated using the Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition (ITERS-R), Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition (ECERS-R), or School-Age Care Environment Rating Scales (SACERS), as appropriate, based on the ages of children in the classrooms; and family child care facilities will be evaluated using the most appropriate fit based on their enrollment. These instruments will certainly provide excellent information on the environment, but more information is needed on how the information generated will be used. Two evaluation anchors will be used to train other evaluators in the state and they will be training at Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina. The State recognizes that it needs outside assistance to fully implement their training plan and has provided a method for obtaining these skills. The monitoring plan states that evaluations will be conducted on 50 percent of center classrooms, with a minimum of one class per age group in each child care center. This is very ambitious and it is not clear that it is achievable given the budget. The applicant did not demonstrate evidence of how it would provide rating and license information to parents beyond displaying them. No information was provided to make program quality indicators available to the public for decision making purposes. The system for monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs was not sufficiently explained. Overall, for families without transportation and perhaps access to computers, it is unclear how the public will actually see and use the information generated.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs</b>	20	11

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 applicant has developed strategies for providing support and incentives for programs to improve the existing system including subsidies for national accreditation, and scholarship incentives. Their subsidy rates provide clear incentives for programs seeking to move up the tiers. The State is providing substantial subsidies through financial rewards and incentives to programs and families. Significant funding has been allocated towards national accreditation at the highest tier level, which is not fully explained when participation above tier one is voluntary. The applicant does not adequately address how Children with High Needs will have increased access to high quality programs that meet their needs or the needs of their families. The number of programs targeted for the top tiers of the TQRIS is not ambitious and the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development programs is not addressed. The State does not provide baseline data on current status of programs or levels of accreditation so it is unclear why the State has chosen to allocate funds in this manner. The applicant's goal for centers and family child care facilities enrolled in TQRIS is to increase at a rate of 5% annually, which represents 18 centers and 5 new facilities annually. For family child care homes, the goal is to increase the number of new homes by 1% annually which represents 19 homes. This is a low number given the amount of funds that is allocated to this section. In addition, scholarship funds are also proposed but tuition information is not provided so it is unclear if this is reasonable or feasible.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.</b>	15	8

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 (E)(6)**

The validation of the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement system relies heavily on the judgement and activities of a yet to be hired independent evaluator. While it is commendable that the State will have a Request for Proposals for an evaluator in the first quarter of this project, the budget does not adequately support this persons scope of work. The majority of activities are conducted solely by one individual as detailed in the evidence provided in table and narrative. The State has given the evaluator the responsibility of securing relevant data from the information management system and other sources to examine distribution of children by specific site, site type, region, and QRIS rating; assess measures of High Need as covariates in the estimation of the stated early childhood outcome measures, and establish longitudinal measures and use unique identifiers to track the agreed upon outcomes as children transition from the early child care setting into Pre-K, Kindergarten, and later elementary grades. The State has not adequately defined their population of Children with High Needs and so gathering information on them is unclear. More specificity is needed to determine the methods for obtaining this information and exactly how it will be used to improve outcomes for children and families. There is not good alignment in the methods for combining programs for children birth to two and three to five.

**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
<b>(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>
<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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(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;</li> <li>(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;</li> <li>(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</li> <li>(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.</li> </ul>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (C)(1)**

The State's plan focuses on using their recently developed infant and toddler Early Learning and Development Standards and expanding the use of their Pre-K Early Learning and Development Standards. This provides a good starting point and a foundation upon which to build. This plan has been successful and the State has provided evidence of it's success. The applicant claims it will focus on dissemination, awareness and integration of it's Early Learning and Development Standards but failed to adequately address professional development other than expand upon their current Pre-K system. Sufficient evidence was not provided as to how this would transfer to other populations. The state has provided evidence that it's Early Learning and Development Standards are high quality and were developed by experts and key stakeholders and address all developmental domains but does not provide a method to adequately promote understanding of the standards across other programs.

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.</b>	30	20

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 State does not adequately identify or specify Children with High Needs so addressing their needs is problematic for this application. The State reports that an early childhood wellness coordinator and eight regional early childhood wellness specialists will be supported to coordinate with nurse consultants and trainers from the State's six child care resource and referral agencies to identify and address early childhood educator needs for training. This is a good way to transfer information across the State and meet the unique needs of different geographic areas. A clear plan was not described to detail how training needs would be specifically identified in different regions or how needs translated into activities. Specifics were not provided on how the state will ensure that health and behavioral screening occur or how follow-up will be provided. Adequate information was not presented to target the different populations of children and their different needs. Achievable and ambitious targets were not presented to increase the number of Children with High Needs who are screened, referred and participate in ongoing health care. The applicant did provide a program for promoting healthy eating habits, etc. with Choosy Kids: Be Choosy, Be Healthy and I am Moving I am Learning for integration into the tiered QRIS and utilization across early childhood settings. This program proposes to make children health literate while enhancing physical fitness, emotional wellness, and school readiness. This program was a strength of this section and one that was adequately addressed.

**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
<b>(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.</b>	40	18

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 state does not have a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework but plans on establishing workgroups including representatives from higher education to review current credential structure and develop new statewide credentials and degrees. Adequate information is not presented on how the workgroups will actually be implemented. The state does not currently have a career lattice and career planning tool. Given this, more collaboration beyond one career planning person is needed with higher education. Currently a plan does not exist to engage postsecondary institutions and the state will create a strategic plan to strengthen relationships with higher education. Numerous letters of support were not provided so it is unclear if the State's colleges and universities support the engagement and participate fully. The state does not provide compelling evidence as to how the changes in a statewide workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework will improve outcomes for Children with High Needs. Children with High Needs need more definition and identification so that their needs and those of their families can be met and real, sustainable change can take place.

### 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
<b>(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.</b>	40	20

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 State plans to collaborate with the National Institute for Early Education Research to design a kindergarten entry assessment instrument which will align with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards. Sufficient documentation in the form of letters of support or detailed work plans were not provided. Professional development for use of the assessment will include online modules as well as face-to-face mentoring opportunities between educators and regional personnel but it is unclear whether this is sufficient, feasible, or has been useful in the past. The state did not address how the common statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment will inform instruction and services in the early elementary grades or be reported to the statewide longitudinal system as this system has yet to be developed and has not been adequately explained. No evidence was reported as to how the yet to be developed system would be appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used. The State does not provide information on how the project will be funded by resources other than this grant. No private-public partnerships have been addressed and there are not sufficient resources allocated towards dissemination in terms of either time or budget.

	Available	Score
<b>Total Points Available for Selection Criteria</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>167</b>

### Priorities

#### Competitive Preference Priorities

#### Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry</b>	<b>0 or 10</b>	<b>No</b>
<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>		
<b>Comments on (P)(3)</b>		
<p>The State did not 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 and the applicant has not earned a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points on selection criterion (E)(1).</p>		

#### Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
<b>Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.</b>	<b>No</b>
<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>	
<b>Comments on Absolute Priority</b>	

The State's application did not clearly address how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs as this population was not clearly identified or supported by data. The State did not provide information as to who these children are, where they are, what percentage of the State they comprise, and how they are educated. Definition of Children with High Needs states that these are children from birth until kindergarten entry who are from low-income families or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, including children who have disabilities or developmental delays, who are English learners, who reside on "Indian lands" as that term is defined by Section 8013(6) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, of 1985, who are migrant, homeless, or in foster care; and other children as identified by the State. Data was not provided to identify the number or percentages of this population or who specifically the State was purporting to assist. It was unclear how the programs described would improve program quality and outcomes for these children. Given that specific information was not provided on children within the State, comparisons could not be made for children without high needs and how the State would attempt to close the achievement gap. The budget provided by the State was not adequate to fund the different projects and sufficient explanation was not provided as to why money was allocated in the manner it was. The State did not provide clear and compelling evidence that stakeholders in the State were supportive and engaged in this reform agenda.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # WV-5036

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/15/2011 - 3:01 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

Table with 3 columns: Core Area, Available, Score. Row 1: (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development, 20, 12. Includes detailed text description of the core area requirements.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

Through the amount and quality of work that they have accomplished, West Virginia (WV) clearly demonstrates a present and past commitment to improving their Early Learning and Development programs (ELDPs) serving children ages 3 to Kindergarten entry (Universal Pre-K). They have excellent Early Learning Standards and a track record for improving and increasing implementation of their standards over the past 5 years.

past five years, the state provides data that demonstrates that of the ELDPs within the state, four that serve children with disabilities have either decreased or remain about the same and two that serve families with low-income have increased 39% and 57%. The state explains that their birth rate has remained the same over the past decade. This shows a significant increase in the amount of children being served that are from families with low-income, but not children with disabilities or from any other categories of High Need. West Virginia did not provide an explanation as to why they have not seen an increase in enrollment of children with disabilities or other High Need categories over the past five years. This explanation would help the state provide a foundation for the focus of their state reform plan. Supplemental Table A(1)c provides a thorough list of legislation, policies and or practices that currently support ELDPs. The policies help to provide a picture of the state's intent to establish High Quality ELDPs. Some policies or legislation are accompanied by the year that they were enacted, but many do not and thus a clear picture of how practices were implemented in a progression or sequence of time (i.e. how things were built upon or linked to each other) is not provided. It was noted that half (8 out of 16) of the policies/legislation listed are directed toward child care programs. Since this is the area the state is focusing its reform plan, this amount of effort toward regulating this system is not proportional to the amount of funding or focus on improvement and the low amount of funds allocated to support such programs up to this date. This indicates that even though the state found the need to implement many policies and legislation to regulate child care programs, but did not provide funding in order to implement such practices, that the state has failed to match their fiscal priorities with their legislative priorities. Overall, the state's building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system are primarily found within their pre-K system - appropriate standards and health promotion practices. The state acknowledges that they have not adequately built and implemented quality programs for children with birth to three programs. They also explain that, overall, they need to create Comprehensive Assessment Systems, improve their Early Childhood Educator education and professional development programs, create effective data practices, and create a Kindergarten Entry Assessment. However, the state does not focus any discussion on or provide explanations regarding their populations of Children with High Needs. The lack of discussion and explanation regarding their populations of Children with High Needs results in a lack of a foundation on which they need to build the rest of their state reform plan for how they will build a system that increases the quality of ELDPs for Children with High Needs.

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

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 goals laid out by the state follow the criteria outlined for improving program quality and improving child outcomes statewide. They attend to most of the weaknesses that are evident in their current system of serving Children with High Needs - increasing the number of child-care programs available to children birth to three, increasing funding to assist families to enroll their children in birth to three programs, increasing the tier Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) accountability and regulatory system of child-care programs, increasing the number of early educators who have appropriate credentials and developing more materials and tools for educators and evaluators to use to monitor the child-care are all ambitious and achievable goals for the state to achieve within the next four years. The state does not explain how, by focusing on these projects, they will specifically improve outcomes for Children with High Needs and close the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers. West Virginia provides comprehensive explanations and an excellent table of what their state reform agenda is and how they intend to improve and create High-Quality Early Learning and Development programs for children birth to three. They explain that they plan to focus on the child-care programs because they have already greatly improved their pre-K system. The Supplemental Table A(2)-1 very well conceptualizes the projects and the outcomes are well aligned with the goals. The detailed explanations within the table and narrative make it evident that the state has thoroughly examined the details of implementing their plan and intend to do it. They do not, however, explain how addressing the child care system will make the greatest impact on a) the children birth to three as opposed to children in other age ranges and b) the Children with High Needs in the birth to three age range as opposed to their peers. Specific explanations addressing these two components of their reform plan would be important to explain in order to indicate how they intend to improve these children's outcomes and close the readiness gap. Within the West Virginia's summary of their State Plan, they outline 10 projects that tie into their five goals to improve their child-care system. Within these projects they indicate which ones address the Focused Investment Areas (FIA) of C(1) and C(3), D(1) and E(1). While they provide clear plans for what they will do to address and implement C(1) (developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards) and C(3) (identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness), they do not provide a rationale as to why these two criteria will best achieve their goals or why these will have the greatest

impact as opposed the C(2) and C(3). The same holds true for the FIAs of D(1) and E(1).

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

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)**

West Virginia has clearly outlined the duties of the lead agency, the Early Childhood Advisory Council, and their methods for managing the grant throughout the five years. They have provided an organizational chart that summarizes the chain of command and reporting structure which includes new positions (Project Coordinator and Administrative Assistant) of people that would be hired to help manage and oversee implementation of the roles and responsibilities of the participating agencies. With a few exceptions, there is a clear delineation of duties (roles and responsibilities) for all Participating State Agencies. The roles and responsibilities within the different participating government agencies (WV Dept of Ed., WV Dept. of Education and Arts, WV Dept of HHR) align well with what those agencies current primary duties and areas of focus are. Within the reform plan [Project D(1)] and within the organizational chart (and within the list of budgetary allocations to Participating Agencies) the state includes WV Higher Education Policy Commission, but does not include them in Table A(3)-1 regarding governance-related roles and responsibilities. This would indicate that while the WV Higher Education Policy Commission is completing work within the reform plan, they not been provided with a scope-of-work with roles or responsibilities as one of the Participating State Agencies. The state does not provide any further explanation regarding this and does not include any letters of support from the higher education institutions. This indicates that

there is not a clear buy-in from the institutions or to date there is no foundation of collaboration on which to base future work together. Copies of all MOUs for each Participating Agency are completed and included in the application. A list of 30 intermediary organizations is provided that have all provided a letter of intent to support the states reform plan. Regarding the lead agency, the state has also included a realistic scope and sequence of duties, a timeline of implementation of the managing duties and reasonable allocation of funds to support the activities of their managing role (i.e. they have clearly thought out the need for appropriate personnel and committees to manage the project and include methods for keeping all parties informed and up-to-date on the overall State Plan). The state has also obtained commitment through letters and signatures of both state government agencies and private companies within the community (except institutions of higher education) to commit funds and human resources toward achieving the five goals of the state's reform plan.

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

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)**

In the tables and descriptions of existing funds to support West Virginia's state reform plan, WV states that they only provide and describe the new money that will be provided over the duration of the grant and do not include the ongoing state support for the ELDPs. This does not provide a clear picture overall of the total funding that will be allocated to all ELDPs and thus show how the funding support for the proposed child-care system will change the overall funding picture - specifically will it now be proportional to the pre-K program and thus now all children in early childhood programs will receive high quality services and not only 3 and 4 year olds. Again, WV states that they currently spend almost \$117 million on Early Learning and Development programs with a 56% increase since 2007. This figure is true, but it is the children ages 3 to Kindergarten entry that are benefiting from this funding. While this funding and increase demonstrates an excellent commitment to improving their pre-K programs, the lack of previous implementation of standards and a QRIS system for child-care programs and a lack of commitment to funding programs specifically for children birth to three, does not ensure that working on the child-care program now will actually make a great impact on the children in the age range of birth to three. The child care system serves children in other ranges as well. When comparing Supplemental Table A(2)-1 to the narrative in section A(3)a, there are several differences in the descriptions of personnel that will be hired and activities to occur that need funding. For example, for Project C(3), the table specifically lists hiring 1FTE WVDE Coordinator and 8 .5FTE WVDE specialists (9 positions), but the narrative describes 12 different positions and the names of the positions do not correlate between each other. For Project E(1), they list 7 different positions for which that will be hired in the table and in the narrative 3 positions with different position names and FTE allocations. There are several other discrepancies as well. It is, therefore, difficult to understand which positions will actually be funded and part of the state reform plan. According to research, human resources (i.e. highly educated teachers) is important because it is the most valuable resource in the early childhood education system, thus careful thought and planning should be implemented as part of this plan. Overall, with few exceptions, the Budget Summary provides a comprehensive and thorough picture of the allocation of funds across the 10 projects delegated to the four Participating Agencies. The different direct costs, such as personnel, equipment, supplies, contractual, etc. appear reasonably dispersed according to the activities the agencies will engage in to achieve the goals, but the justification and explanation regarding the large amount of funds provided for new or remodeled playgrounds is lacking. While The state discuss the high obesity rate in children in their state, this does not explain why playgrounds will decrease this rate. There is also no research, in general or specifically to their situation, that they did as to why they determined that focusing a large amount of money on playgrounds warrants this funding. The following are comments regarding some inconsistencies found within the Budget Summary. These are specifically noteworthy, because if for some reason the state forgot to allocate these funds or made an error in

calculating how much a particular project or group of projects would cost to be implemented, the result could be a lack of implementation of major components of the overall plan. Regarding Participating Agency WVDE: Even though the state indicates that WVDE is involved with (persons responsible) Project D(1), there are no funds allocated to this agency and no explanation as to why no funds are allocated for them to assist with the implementation of this project. Regarding Participating Agency WVDHHR: The narrative description for the costs for the each project year 1 and 2 for Projects B(1) through B(5) do not correlate with any numbers listed in the tables regarding project funding. It is unclear what the funds actually are that are allocated for projects B(1) through B(5). Regarding Participating Agency WVECAC: Even though the state indicates that WVDE is involved with (persons responsible) Project C(1), there are no funds allocated to this agency and no explanation as to why no funds are allocated for them to assist with the implementation of this project (i.e. are they re-allocating current positions to focus on this project). There is also not any explanation provided, other than a statement of commitment, regarding how the state plans to sustain the outcomes of the projects beyond the duration of the grant. While they list the new monies that will be allocated from other sources than the grant for the four years of the grant, there is no discussion of continued funding after 2015. Even if these other monies are continued to be implemented to support the implementation of the plan, there is no justification or reasoning regarding the sufficiency of these funds to sustain the plan.

**B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs**

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>
<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"> <li>(1) Early Learning and Development Standards;</li> <li>(2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;</li> <li>(3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;</li> <li>(4) Family engagement strategies;</li> <li>(5) Health promotion practices; and</li> <li>(6) Effective data practices;</li> </ul> <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)**

West Virginia states that in 2009 legislation was passed that require the state to implement a tiered QRIS system for all types of child care programs. The code requires a four-tiered system with specific standards, measures, incentive and support components in place. A new plan was just drafted in September of 2011. At this point the state has not implemented a tiered QRIS rating system for child care programs but have implemented a three tiered QRIS system within the Universal pre-K system. The proposed QRIS rating plan that WV has proposed is aligned with the same system that was in place for pre-K. Within that system they have recognized the fact that they were missing crucial parts - a Comprehensive Assessment System and effective data practices. They have outlined a new four-tiered QRIS rating system that includes these aspects as well as addressing the standards of the NAEYC. WV sets forth their plan for developing and implementing the Comprehensive Assessment System and effective data practices within their QRIS rating system. They provide clear goals, activities, timelines, personnel, and resources toward accomplishing their plan. One of their main strategies for accomplishing their goals is to align these standards for the child care programs with those already implemented successfully in the Universal pre-K system and Head Start program. The state has received a high ranking from NIEER for their implementation of these standards for 3 (8th in nation) and 4 (3rd in nation) year olds and currently have quality pre-K standards. This year, they completed their infant/toddler standards which they aligned with their pre-K standards. This put the state in a good position in which to create their child care standards during the course of implementing the State Plan. WV's explanation for how they will address the needs of the different types of ELDPs and how they will meet the needs of Children with High Needs is significantly lacking. For both areas they simply state that they commit to ensuring the needs of all programs and all children within their system. This does not provide the specificity that is needed to show that WV has examined the different practices used to address the needs of children with different types of backgrounds, conditions or disabilities that are exhibited by Children with High Needs. WV's reform plan is focused on only one type of ELDP, the child care system, which encompasses a huge age range of Children with and without High Needs. The state provides only one sentence which explains their linkage of QRIS to the state licensing system - all one-star programs (in their current QRI System) are licensed programs. This is not sufficient information to explain why they have decided to do this and if and why they will change this in their reform plan. Because they require one-star (lowest tier) programs to be licensed, it



does suggest that they intend to require all programs within the state to be licensed. Given the above description of elements of the plan currently implemented and not implemented at this point, it is determined that the state has a partially implemented, medium-quality plan.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	15	5

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)**

WV states that they intend to implement effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded ELDPs participate in their tiered QRIS system. However, in performance measures Table B(2)c there is no baseline or target numbers provided for participation except for programs receiving CCDF funds (there is also no explanation as to why the data is missing). Therefore, it appears that the only programs which the state intends to increase the participation of are those receiving CCDF funds. The state describes their goal for increasing and maintaining a supply of high-quality child care for Children with High Needs as a plan to utilize a "multi-faceted" public awareness campaign to educate people and by raising their subsidy rates for higher tier programs. This would help increase the enrollment of children from low-income families, but not necessarily children with other High Needs. Additionally, while they provide a commendable additional daily subsidy rate per child per tier (i.e. an additional \$2 per day for a two-star rated program), they do not explain what the overall current average costs are to families for the four different child care programs. They also do not provide the current daily subsidy rate per child per day in order to compare or understand the percent the state will cover for families to send their children to child care. They also do not discuss how they will target specific incentives to families (all incentives are to programs, which indirectly target families). For example, since this is a rural state it would seem that part of the difficulties families would incur would be transportation to and from facilities. The state does not discuss such things nor how they would or do help families physically access facilities. This is particularly crucial for families with Children with High Needs who may not be able to attend the nearest facility because that location does not address his or her needs. The state does not explain why they have determined that involvement in the tiered QRIS is voluntary past tier 1. Based on the fact that there is voluntary involvement past tier 1 and there is currently not a high percentage of involvement in the current QRIS, an increase of 5% of programs per year (projected by the state) is an ambitious, but not necessarily achievable goal. A voluntary system that is only currently utilized with CCDF funded programs does not lead to a high-quality reform plan to reach a goal of having all publicly funded ELDPs participate in the tiered QRIS system. Based on the evidence and information provided and the comments provided above, this state has a minimally-implemented, medium-quality plan.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs</b>	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)**

WV outlines clear goals, activities, timelines, personnel, and financial resources to select valid tools for monitoring the programs within the tiered QRIS system, as well as hiring and training persons to monitor the programs. They have provided recognized environmental rating tools that are currently used to evaluate different child care centers and facilities. They have provided an appropriate plan for frequency of evaluations (annual) and the use of improvement plans that result after each evaluation. They also include self-assessments which is proven to increase participation in improvement plans. Their goals and methods outlined for developing a web-based information management system for the the new QRIS is an important aspect in increasing professionals' awareness regarding the current quality ratings of all ELDPS. Due to the fact that the state is rural that there are large areas in the state where cell reception and internet access are not available or difficult to obtain, a web-based information system may not improve access for parents. A central database that allows certain information to be available to professionals and consumers should still help improve understanding of the overall quality and availability of ELDPs across the state and help motivate more programs to participate because the public will know how they are rated. Based on the evidence and information provided and the above comments states, WV has partially-implemented medium-quality plan.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>8</b>
<p>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--</p> <p>(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);</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--</p> <p>(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and</p> <p>(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.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(4)**

The state describes several commendable practices that they intend to implement to provide supports and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs and for tier progression. One is to assist programs with the cost of national accreditation, which is a requirement for tier 4 in their new QRIS. While the current numbers and percents are provided regarding the currently licensed and accredited child care centers, home and facilities, there is no overall total number of all centers, homes and facilities so that there is overall comparison of accredited vs. non-accredited. With no total available for all centers, home and facilities, there is no way to gain a picture of how many programs there are that are still not accredited and therefore not able to progress to tier 4 at this point. Another method for improving tier progression is the state's proposal to provide incentive funds for homes, centers and facilities. While they list the impressive incentive funds provided for each program, they do not explain if the funds are provided on a yearly basis or a one time payment upon reaching that tier. This would make a great difference in the amount of money the programs would expect to gain. The state does not discuss any methods for supporting working families who have Children with High Needs to access high-quality ELDPs. This indicates that the state has not analyzed the particular areas of need for such families and the difficulties or lack of difficulty such parents have to accessing high-quality ELDPs. While the state provides projected numbers and percentages for how many Children with High Needs will be increased, there is no explanation regarding how that increase will be accomplished. This demonstrates a lack of specific focus on making quality programs accessible to Children with High Needs and indicates that the projected goals are not necessarily achievable. Based on the evidence and information provided by the state and the above comments, the state has a minimally-implemented, medium-quality plan.

	Available	Score
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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)**

WV provides an extensive and clear plan to address the validity of their tiered QRIS rating system, as well as a research design that will measure which changes in quality ratings are related to the progress of children's learning, development and school readiness. In this specific criterion, they provide some explanations to address how they will include specific measures to ensure the needs of Children with High Needs are being met. The state provides a considerable amount of evidence of this high quality plan to design and implement evaluations. One is that the state plans to hire a qualified outside evaluator (experience in WV early childhood programs) through a competitive bid process - the competitive bid process for an outside evaluator ensures that someone who is not personally invested in the reform plan is evaluating the tiered QRIS. Another, is that WV demonstrates the importance of measuring both the formative and summative components of their QRIS system. This allows them to understand what about the process works and what the outcomes of the QRIS are. They also plan to ensure the concurrent validity of their QRIS ratings as compared to other measures and determine if the QRIS ratings are positively associated with outcomes for children in the programs. They provide explanations about how they will track agreed upon outcomes as children transition from early child care programs in to the pre-K, K and elementary grades. This will provide information all the way down the progression of programs if they are adequately preparing the children for the next level of education. Finally, they describe specific methods that they will assess to measures of High Need as part of the early childhood outcome measures. One is that they will assess measures of High Need as covariates in the overall early childhood outcome measures - these measures will match the definitions of RTT-ELC's definitions of the different Children with High Needs. This will help to know not only if overall outcomes are being achieved as a result of higher quality programs, but if, specifically, Children with High Needs are achieving higher outcome levels.

**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
<b>(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>
<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</p>		

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)**

WV provides full and comprehensive sets of Early Learning and Development Standards for each infant/toddler, pre-K (3-4 year olds), and Kindergarten through First grade. They address all the Essential Domains of School Readiness within each set of standards and they demonstrate how they align with each other across all domains. The state provides documentation to show how the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in their state's Program Standards. The state outlines their plan for increasing dissemination, awareness and integration of the Early Learning and Development Standards within their current early learning programs. There are several areas of strengths and weaknesses within the state's plan to incorporate and promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards. Evidence that supports their State Reform Plan include: a) the state acknowledges that they need to incorporate the standards into their Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and provide a detailed explanation of their work with their state's higher education institutions in criterion D(1); b) the state acknowledges that they currently do not have in place a Comprehensive Assessment System, but explain their plan to implement this as part of their reform plan; c) the state recognizes that they need to expand the supports that they use to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards; d) the state has also given a name to their reform plan, called Ready, Set Go! and they provide, as part of their plan, methods for developing a new handbook and for integrating and disseminating this handbook throughout their early learning programs across the state. There are also several areas in which the state showed deficits regarding their State Reform Plan. WV provides a minimal amount of documentation regarding their professional development activities within the pre-K system and include, as part of their plan the expansion of Pre-K professional development system and the new development of professional development system for the infant and toddler programs. WV does not provide documentation or information regarding the curricula that they use or how it incorporates the Early Learning and Development Standards. They do not include this as part of their reform plan. This is a crucial missing component of the state practices - demonstrating that they have an evidence-based curriculum that aligns to their standards and provides activities for the educators to teach skills and address children's needs. Based on the evidence and information provided and the comments provided above, this appears to be a partially-implemented, high-quality plan.

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.</b>	30	18

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)**

Currently WV has approved Program Standards and procedures in place for tracking and supporting the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of school-aged children, and for tracking the health needs of pre-K children. They propose a detailed and appropriate plan to expand their birth through 5 standards, training, supports, technical assistance activities and tracking methods regarding the health and developmental needs of all children birth through 5. To date, WV acknowledges that they have not implemented many of the components of this criterion, but they present a plan to remedy their lack of methods for addressing health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness. WV states that the Office of Early Care and Education will revise current birth to three (infant and toddler) Program and QRIS standards to include developmental and behavioral screenings. The WV Birth to Three/Part C policies already include development assessment, referral and provision of appropriate services, but will be expanded to include requirements for health promotion and health literacy. WV discusses their plan to increase access to high-quality professional development for Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) regarding health standards through an increase of seminar strands regarding health to be included at statewide early childhood conferences. They also discuss their plan to utilize monies from the grant to increase the support for early childhood centers to promote an implement practices and data keeping methods. WV states that they will utilize the state's Technical Assistance for Children's Social and Emotional Intervention (TACSEI) state leadership team (to assist with their professional development system for improving ECEs understanding regarding the health standards and implementing them within the classroom. There are several areas which the state appears to lack components that would produce a comprehensive plan. WV states that they will ensure that all their new supports, trainings and tracking plan for addressing the unique needs of Children with High Needs. Unfortunately there is no specific delineation or explanation of activities or persons responsible for ensuring such implementation. While the state mentions the importance and need for promoting positive social emotional development and in supporting children with more challenging behaviors, but methods for addressing these needs are not provided within this plan. WV provides documentation regarding the progression of health standards across the levels of Program Standards for their various Early Learning and Development programs, but is missing data for two crucial programs that are a part of the overall reform plan to address children within early childhood programs – those receiving CCDF funds and the In-home family education program. Based on the evidence and information provided and comments provided above the state has 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
<b>(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>30</b>

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)

WV acknowledges that their current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework (WV STARS State Training and Registry System: Core Knowledge and Core Competencies for Early Care and Education Professional) needs to be revised and updated so that it is no longer perceived as only for professionals who provide child care, but is instead relevant to all early childhood professionals. They propose to develop one framework for all early childhood programs and then develop a training module and professional development tool kit to help training ECEs on their core knowledge and competencies. This will greatly improve the ability of the ECEs to understand what the expectations are for their position and specifically for their position based on the type of early childhood facility in which they work. The state provides a plan to develop a common statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with their Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. The Early Childhood Advisory Council Professional Development Committee will lead this project and plans to develop statewide progression of credentials and degrees, including finalizing the infant/toddler and directors' credentials, expand and revise the current career ladder into a lattice and develop tools to help educators in planning their career paths. However, they do not provide an explanation as to how these revisions to the competency framework will specifically improve the outcomes of Children with High Needs. The state's plan, lead by WV Higher Education Policy Commission, to engage post-secondary institutions and other professional development providers in improving the states Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework involves utilizing a new career advisory coordinator to help develop a plan to align the the coursework and professional

development activities with the new framework. They also plan to develop agreement with postsecondary institutions to increase the availability of college credit for qualifying professional development opportunities. While they provide these statements of intent to collaborate it is unclear if they have or have not up to this point worked together regarding any early childhood program development. They propose one person to be a representative/coordinator, but given the evident lack of previous collaboration or foundations for a relationship, this does not appear to be enough to help bridge the gap between the state's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the postsecondary institutions. Based on the evidence and information provided and the above comments, this state appears to have 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
<b>(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>16</b>
<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>At this time, WV does not currently have a Kindergarten Entry Assessment. Within their pre-K program, they have a Child Assessment System which provides a Child Accomplishments Summary. They plan to add another component to the pre-K assessment that is the Kindergarten Transition Plan. They propose to develop the WV Kindergarten Child Assessment System(K-CAS) through collaboration with the National Institute for Early Education Research and the WV Department of Education's Office of School of Readiness. WV ensures that this assessment will include all the Essential Domains of School Readiness, is aligned with their state's Kindergarten Content Standards, is appropriate for Children with High Needs, is concurrent with National Research Council's report on early childhood assessments and utilizes standards of evidence for psychometric purposes. They state this K-CAS will not be used to prevent children from attending Kindergarten, but instead to provide information and data to educators, early childhood stakeholders, and families regarding the status and progress of children through the early childhood programs and inform instruction and planning. While they make this list of crucial components for their new K-CAS, they do not provide specifics for how they will address the unique aspects of assessment regarding Children with High Needs, nor how they will use the results to inform their instruction and practices within the Kindergarten classroom, nor inform back to the ELDPs areas in which they excel and need to improve. The state discusses the use of the current pre-K Child Accomplishments Summary, their formative assessment that currently provides them with outcome data regarding children in the pre-K system, as the basis for developing their K-CAS. This summary contains fields for Health Information, Social Emotional/Social Studies, Language and Literacy, Mathematics and Science, Physical and Health development (fine and gross motor and health and safety practices). The Health Information field is the only field that provides specific items to be written or assessed and recorded. All other fields consist of two blank boxes with no guidelines in the top box as to what is to be written in it and the second box states Next Steps/Suggestions for families with no specificity. This assessment does not cover the domains of approaches to learning and cognitive development. It also does not demonstrate how it aligns with the WV Early Learning Standards Framework Pre-K. This indicates that these areas may also be overlooked in the development of the K-CAS. The newly developed Kindergarten Transition Plan follows the same domains as the Child Accomplishments Summary but also includes fields for recording information regarding specific skills (there is no explanation for type of record/data taking procedures). This one Child Accomplishments Summary is not a sufficient or appropriate "data" system on which to base the new</p>

construction of the new Kindergarten Entry Assessment - lacks any specific fields regarding which to assess. They also do not discuss the use of any method for developing a valid and reliable assessment other than basing it on the current pre-K Child Accomplishment Summary and future use of the Kindergarten Transition Plan - neither has been researched or demonstrated to be a reliable and valid assessment tool. WV plans to provide and describes extensive professional development for all Kindergarten teachers regarding the assessment with the goal that they will implement the new Kindergarten assessment system by the school year 2014-2015. This professional development will ensure that the educators are prepared to implement the assessment and understand the results in order to use them to inform their instruction. They plan to include the data in the statewide database and provide annual reports for each county to use regarding the status of their children upon entry to Kindergarten. This will improve the overall state plan to more unify their data system in order to improve their collaboration and communication regarding child outcomes and changes needed to the overall early childhood system in order to improve child outcomes. The numbers provided within the tables demonstrate that this project is not funded, in significant part by federal or State resources other than those under this grant (\$6,879,861 from RTT-ELC vs. \$439,000 from other sources). Based on the evidence and information provided and the above comments, this appears to be a partially-implemented, medium-quality plan.

	Available	Score
<b>Total Points Available for Selection Criteria</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>169</b>

### Priorities

#### Competitive Preference Priorities

#### Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry</b>	<b>0 or 10</b>	<b>No</b>
<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>		
<b>Comments on (P)(3)</b>		
<p>Currently the state does not have a Kindergarten Entry Assessment and while they provide an adequate plan for disseminating their data and training their staff, they do not have, nor have they appropriately outlined how they will develop a reliable and valid Kindergarten assessment tool based on the Early Learning and Development Standards for Kindergarten, thus they did not receive at least a 70 percent of the maximum point for E(1).</p>		

#### Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
<b>Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.</b>	<b>No</b>
<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>	
<b>Comments on Absolute Priority</b>	

Only once throughout the entire application does WV acknowledge within one sentence that the majority of its children within the birth to five age range fall within the category of Children with High Needs. They never acknowledge through any statement (only provide numbers data within a table) that most of their children with High Needs fall in the birth to three age range. While the state acknowledges that the greatest area of children with high needs within their state are those from families with low-income, the state never provides specific and detailed information regarding how they will address the needs of these children or children within the other categories of Children with High Needs. They make almost the same statement at the end of each criterion, with the exception of criterion B(5), that they will ensure that implementation of their plan will ensure that all needs of Children with High Needs will be addressed, but provide no explanation as to how they will do so. Without a detailed plan regarding each of these areas, the state has not demonstrated that they place a priority on addressing the needs of different and unique needs Children with High Needs.





Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # WV-5036

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 9:25 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, 15. Includes sub-points (a) through (d) describing the state's investment and programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

The applicant provides a reasonable description and evidence for the State's past and continued commitment and investment to high quality Early Learning and Development programs and services for children with high needs. The State's funding has increased approximately 57% from 2007 to 2011. The applicant has consistently continued to significantly increase the enrollment of children into its Pre-K and home visiting programs; however, smaller increases have been made in Early Head Start and Head Start programs and programs receiving CCDF funds. The applicant has provided little information in the narrative of the application to suggest how these numbers will increase over time. Because these children would essentially be the children with high needs that are served such information is critical to addressing whether or not the children most in need of high quality care would be served. That said, the State has not provided a clear definition of high needs and therefore it is difficult to determine whether or not an increase in the above mentioned categories would be appropriate as any increase might be dependent upon the definition. In addition, the State has experienced a drop in the enrollment of children with disabilities in its programs. The applicant proposes as part of the grant to increase the number of participating children with disabilities by providing greater access and exposure to the Early Learning Standards. However, the applicant does not provide enough information in the application to address how this will be done. Finally, the applicant includes numbers in its tables which indicate it is serving the same number of low income children across all age groups. That said, those numbers appear to be inconsistent with the drop off in service to children across programs. The applicant has partnered with researchers, public and private agencies, lawmakers and administrators to inform, develop, and modify legislation, policies and practices as evidenced in the Quality Rating and Improvement Study prepared by the Center of Business and Economic Research at the Marshall University. Furthermore, the applicant has provided a supplemental table that incorporated information about legislation, policies and practices that support their Early Learning and Development programs. These partnerships indicate the commitment of the State to work across public and private agencies to ensure that early education needs of children are met. In addition, the State has provided clear documentation of its Early Learning and Development Standards. However, it has also provided evidence for the partial implementation of a Comprehensive Assessment System, the partial inclusion of health promotion practices across early childhood settings with

policies being added for health promotion, health literacy and promotion and linkage between the primary health care providers for programs funded under IDEA Part C. That said, programs receiving funding under CCDF have the lowest number of elements under high quality health promotion practices in place. The State has included no plan to increase them. The applicant has provided a detailed description and evidence for high quality family engagement practices currently employed across early childhood programs across the State. Moreover, the applicant has provided information about the workforce credentials across the State. No data was available for the number of workforce staff holding a CDA, BA, or MA credential. Obtaining this information is critical, as the State wishes to increase the quality of its workforce going forward and knowing how many qualified staff it already has on board is important to setting the targets over the next 5 years. The applicant has provided a detailed description of institutions and other professional development providers who issue credentials to early childhood educators. The State has also provided a description of its Kindergarten Assessment programs, with instruments currently not in place to assess the physical well-being of children. Having this component in place is critical in order to have a high quality and comprehensive system. Finally, the State has partially implemented a data system which is incomplete. The system will need to be completed and integrated with the overall system of Early Education to increase the quality for the entire system. The applicant has carefully described and provided limited information about the current status of some of the key areas that comprise a high quality Early Learning and Development System within the State as part of the proposal. More information would have been helpful.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.</b>	20	16

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 applicant has proposed a reasonable and ambitious plan to establish a system that would allow it to measure, track and report on the school readiness of its 5 year old children with high needs. That said, it is not clear from the application how the State is defining "children with high needs", thus making it difficult to assess whether the proposed plan would actually raise the quality of care for those children who are most in need of such programs. The proposal builds on the State's earlier work and progress in addressing and improving outcomes for all children, particularly those with high needs. The first goal of the proposed plan will be to increase the participation of Early Learning and Development programs, particularly those that serve underserved infants and toddlers, in the tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. If this goal is met there will be an improvement in the quality and access to services for children with high needs and their families. The second goal is to improve the qualifications of the early childhood workforce through collaboration with institutions of higher education and the awarding of scholarships. If this goal is met there will be an increase in the number of qualified professionals in the workplace who provide services for children with high needs. In addition, the State intends to increase exposure to and the use of the infant/toddler and Early Learning and Development standards as well as the Comprehensive Framework for school readiness through a public awareness campaign. If this goal is met it might increase the use of Standards by all early childhood educators, programs, and stakeholders across the state. The State also proposes to develop new tools and programs that will address the health and behavioral needs of children with high needs who are the least likely to receive services. It is the State's intent to close the readiness gap between children with high needs and their peers entering kindergarten. The overarching goal is to improve access and quality of programs, increase the number of qualified professionals serving children with high needs, align standards across programs and address the mental and physical health needs of children. If these goals are met the State would continue to make progress toward its long term goal of providing high quality and accessible education to its most vulnerable children. Finally, it is the intent of the state to develop a new assessment system that will allow it to systematically provide program planning, informed instruction and provide parents with relevant and consistent information. Achieving the goals set forth in the State's plan will be important to increase the quality of its programs to serve the needs of high needs children and their families. That said, because there is no clear definition for children with high needs it is problematic to know whether or not the children who need these programs the most will have access. In order to ensure that families and children with high needs have access to high quality programs, and know and understand that standards exist, the State is proposing to support a public awareness campaign. In order for families to use high quality care they need to know that it is available. This then is a reasonable and logical next step for the State as it is an area that is partially implemented. This is an interesting and novel strategy; however, it is not clear that the materials will be presented in such a way that the neediest families will be able to make use of them. The above mentioned goals outlined in the State's plan provide a logical rationale for the focus areas they have chosen to address. The State has chosen to focus on areas that have received little attention and investment. If the State develops and retains its workforce then it will address the current gap by helping to move the early childhood workforce along the career pathway, by providing high needs children with a highly qualified workforce (D1). Moreover, by aligning the standards from birth through 3rd grade

the State will provide a foundation that will ensure consistency and coherency, the ingredients necessary for school readiness and success (C1). Addressing the health needs of young children is a concern for the State. Therefore, developing tools and aligning practices around health and behavioral needs is an important next step in providing high quality care for children with high needs and is an appropriate focus for State (C3). And finally, in order to close the achievement gap in elementary, middle school and high school it is important to understand the progress that children are making prior to grade school entry (E1). Therefore the State's choice of "understanding the early learning and development" will allow them to establish an important element of the system that can be linked and utilized to provide high quality information to assist in the instruction and implementation of programs, policies and practices for children with high needs. Again, while the plan is reasonable, the State has not clearly defined "children with high needs" and thus it is difficult to assess whether or not the proposed plan will meet the targeted outcomes set by the State.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State</b>	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 provided an organizational chart that describes how the work of the grant will be distributed across the agencies involved in the implementation and dissemination of the project. The governance structure proposed appears to be reasonable and adequate to ensure the successful implementation of the grant. However, the applicant has provided little evidence to demonstrate that a foundation has been established between agencies to ensure a good working relationship, such as previous collaboration on jointly funded projects. Furthermore the applicant has provided limited information as to what the role of private partners or other stakeholders such as institutions of higher education would be in the process. Such information would be helpful in assessing whether or not the grant would be successfully implemented. According to the proposal, decision-making and dispute resolution regarding the RTT-ELC funds or the State plan will follow the bylaws put forth by the Early Learning Advisory Council of the State. The existing structure and organization of the Early Childhood Advisory Council will be coordinated with the ELC funding, thus ensuring a smooth alignment and coordination of the early learning and development across the state. Based on the bylaws every member of the council will have one vote. The bylaws will ensure that every member has a voice, which ensures collaboration and the successful completion of the project. Participating State Agencies will have direct oversight of the grant through their representation on the Early Childhood Advisory Council of the State. The overall approach to solving disputes given the makeup of the council appears to be appropriate. That said, it would have been helpful to have more information concerning the selection of the Early Learning Advisory Council so as to ensure the appropriate oversight of the project. The State has also provided MOUs signed by each participating agency indicating their willingness to carry out the scope of work outlined in the memorandum. In addition, the State has provided a timetable as well as letters that have been provided in support of the application. However, although the above mentioned information has been provided, it is not clear from the timetable how long each task will take to be completed. More detail would have been helpful. In addition, several of the letters of support were not signed by the originator, and several did not specify their level of involvement in the project. The response was scored in the medium range.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>

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 proposed a reasonable plan for using funds beginning in 2012, from federal, state, local and private funding to support Early Learning and Development Systems. The State also provides a description of the projects to be undertaken by the participating agencies over the course of the grant. That said, the applicant does not provide a specific overview as to the exact personnel as well as the expertise that would be needed to complete the project, thus making it difficult to assess whether the budget cost for proposed personnel is appropriate for the implementation of the project. More detail would have been helpful. Similarly, the applicant has budgeted for psychometric services, yet has provided little information on what those services would entail, making it difficult to assess whether or not the scope of monies budgeted for the work over the four years is appropriate. Similarly, the applicant has budgeted for travel, equipment, supplies and computers across the state agencies but little information was provided in the narrative to justify the monies requested. A more itemized budget would have been helpful in order to assess if the funds were adequate for implementation of the State's proposed plan. The State draws attention to the sustainability of playgrounds to be built in communities serving children with high needs based on the grant funding. The State however, does not provide information as to the current status of playgrounds in these communities, i.e. the number and condition of these play spaces, making it difficult to assess whether playgrounds or the proposed budget will meet the needs of the communities. More detail about this area would have been helpful. In addition, the applicant has proposed a very sophisticated and ambitious kindergarten assessment system that will require a high level of expertise. However, the applicant has not provided an itemized

breakdown of the personnel that would be needed to complete the project thereby making it difficult to assess whether the budget is appropriate for the proposed scope of work. Moreover, with the overall budget the applicant has underestimated the cost. Lack of such information makes it difficult to assess whether or not the proposed project can be sustained at the end of the award. This response was scored in the medium range.

**B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs**

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	10	8

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)**

The applicant has provided a plan that is the next step in providing a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System for all types of childcare that will allow it to assess, improve, and communicate the level and quality of its child care programs to all its stakeholders. The applicant has provided evidence that demonstrates how the new system will be a four star rating system with program standards that will be aligned across the State's pre-k standards, federal Head Start standards, State guidelines governing programs funded under Part C and section 619 of Part B of IDEA. While the State has provided evidence for the use of program standards currently used across the state in its programs, it should be noted that the use of comprehensive assessment systems and effective data practices are missing from the overall use of program standards throughout the State. In addition, the applicant provides evidence for the alignment to particular NAEYC standards. There is much overlap between the standards, particularly for more advanced tiers. The use of NAEYC as a benchmark demonstrates the State's commitment to developing high quality programs for children with high needs across the State. In addition, the State has provided adequate evidence through its legislation QRIS code that describes the linking of licensing to the QRIS system. Because all one star programs must be licensed this legislation provides compelling evidence that all programs in the system will have to be licensed. Furthermore, the State proposes to include measurable standards that will include family childcare homes, family care facilities and child home care centers. Much of the work provided in the proposal was guided by the work of workgroups to develop programs that address the health and well being of the citizens of West Virginia, address the former Governor's Five Promises to children which was to provide them with caring adults, safe spaces, a healthy start, effective education and opportunities to help others and adapt and incorporate State specific initiatives such as the Early Learning Standards Framework and State Training and Registry System Core Knowledge/Core Competencies. Basing the inclusion of measurable standards in the proposed project and building on previous work is a reasonable next step for the State because it allows the State to continually improve upon a foundation it has established based on evidence. The State has provided evidence that program standards differentiate program quality levels and reflect program excellence based on its use and alignment of standards. This work has already been completed with the State, and the State is in the process of incorporating screening tools into its Early Learning and Development Standards that will identify children with special needs, a group that has been underrepresented in its programs. Again the State is building upon its previous foundation and taking the next step to improve the quality of programs for children. Finally, the State will work on developing and adopting program standards for a comprehensive system and developing effective data practices. These two areas are currently missing from the State's system and therefore are appropriate areas for the state to address in its plan in order to develop a comprehensive system, thereby ensuring access to high quality programs for all children. The proposal has much merit, but the program is only partially implemented.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	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)**

The state has proposed a reasonable plan to ensure an increase in program participation in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. The State has budgeted funding for a public relations firm to conduct a public awareness campaign around the importance of quality early childhood education and the state's long term economic growth and development. That said, while the proposed plan is important and ambitious the timeline does not provide enough information concerning the length of time it would take for the state to employ a public relations agency or how many months it would take to launch a successful campaign. Lack of such information makes it difficult to assess whether or not the approach would be successful. Moreover, it is not clear from the plan that even if the public relations campaign is launched it will reach those populations who are most vulnerable, such as homeless families and children. To increase participation of families in high quality child care programs the state is proposing a strategy where after its transition to a four star tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, a two star program will be reimbursed at the rate of \$2 daily per child, a three star program, \$3 daily per child, and a four star program \$4 daily per child. The expectation is that higher rates will encourage centers to accept subsidized children, while simultaneously providing income to support the higher cost of quality care. Given the lack of access to affordable high quality early childcare, this method will help to increase the number of programs available to children and families. This is a strategy that has been used in other States with much success and the State has provided evidence as part of its proposal for the allocation of funding to support the increase of high quality care for children with high needs, therefore ensuring that the proposed plan is feasible. That said, although the state proposes to increase the quality of care for children with high needs it makes no mention in its proposal for providing supports to families to ensure that they can get their children to the programs. If families do not have access to transportation then they will not be able to get to the high quality program. It would have been helpful if the applicant had provided some information on how children in the State commute to school and what resources are present in the State to address this need. Furthermore it is not clear from the information provided in the tables whether or not the applicant would be increasing the quality of programs within the TORIS system over the course of the next four years because limited information was provided. In addition, the applicant provided limited information in the narrative to support the numbers reported in the tables. More information would have been useful to assess whether or not the targets for the numbers in the tables were ambitious and achievable.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>

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 State has outlined a reasonable plan that will entail selecting valid and reliable instruments and technology to perform on-site evaluations as well as the training of evaluators through the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute. The State proposes to develop a monitoring system that will include two accountability measures: annual evaluations and determination of the tier level, and the use of the Environmental Rating Scale by trained evaluators. The intent is that as child care centers apply for higher star ratings, they will be reevaluated to determine if their setting meets the criteria for the higher star rating that equates with higher levels of quality. Such a system would provide standardization the process of certifying quality ratings. That said, the State has provided no evidence from the Frank Porter Graham Institute indicating their willingness to serve in the capacity of evaluator for the project. In addition, the State proposes to build a web-based data management system that will be used to provide a systematic presentation and use of data to support and enhance high quality programs intended for children with high needs. The proposed system will also include a publicly available website that will provide information to assist families in selecting high quality programs for their children. If all of the above goals are met more high quality programs will be available to children with high needs and their families. However, while providing access to the information on the web is a good method for reaching families no mention has been made as to how families who lack access to a computer will receive information. Although this method may have worked in other communities the state has provided no clear evidence as to how this will work in rural settings. More information would have been helpful in order to assess the feasibility and likely sustainability of this activity. While the applicant has addressed the criteria for this section by proposing state- of- the art training for its evaluator and by providing publicly available data to all stakeholders and families due to lack of information the proposed methods might not be feasible.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs</b>	20	12
<p>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--</p> <p>(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);</p> <p>(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</p> <p>(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--</p> <p>(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and</p> <p>(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.</p>		

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (B)(4)**

The applicant proposes to increase the number of providers in the top tier of the Quality Rating and Improvement System. To reach this goal the state proposes to develop a plan that will provide funding to move programs from lower tiers to higher tiers, as well as to become nationally accredited programs with the ultimate goal of serving children with high needs. First, because the applicant has not defined children with high needs it is difficult to know who will be served. In addition, the applicant has not provided any information on what if any incentives it will provide families with to support them in acquiring access to high quality programs. For example, the State provides no information on how families will travel to the new high quality programs. Not having access to transportation is a hardship for a majority of families with high needs children and often presents a barrier to the access of high quality early childhood education. Not addressing such an issue poses a problem because even if the State succeeds in raising the quality of the programs, if families are unable to get to the programs then the high quality programs will not benefit the children who need them the most. Furthermore, the applicant provides information indicating that the vast majority of its programs within the system are within the tier one range. That said based on the reported figures the applicant is intending to raise the level high quality (tier 4) over the next 4 years only minimally. Doing so would therefore only provides a limited number high quality programs for children with high needs. As children with high needs require the highest quality of programs such an approach will not allow the State to serve its children with the greatest need. In addition, the applicant proposes to fund two scholarship programs that will provide aid for those seeking to improve their credentials. While the scholarships will offset the cost of obtaining advanced credentials, the applicant does not provide any information as to the actual cost of obtaining the credential and whether the scholarship by itself will actually lead to an increase in the workforce obtaining more advanced credentials over time. Moreover, it is not clear how many scholarships would be given per year making it difficult to assess how many additional qualified staff would be added to the workforce. Furthermore, the applicant has provided information on the targets they set for moving the program to higher tiers.

However, because the movement to a higher tier is based on the credentials of the workforce it is difficult to assess whether the targets are an accurate reflection of moving programs to higher levels of quality due to the limited information that is presented for securing funding for improvement the credentials of the workforce. More detail would have been helpful to assess the benefits of the proposed programs. The applicant however does propose to use its RTT-ELC funds to provide incentives to help programs with the cost of national accreditation, which is a requirement for Tier 4 in the state's QRIS system and the top tier for its current reimbursement system. The overarching goal is to get more high quality programs into the top tier of the QRIS system so as to serve more children with high needs. By allocating funding to help offset the cost of accreditation the state is providing a reasonable policy that will continue to improve the quality of Early Education programs. The program is partially implemented and scored in the medium range.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.</b>	15	8

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)

An outside evaluation team has been proposed by the applicant to design and implement and evaluation that will examine the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. The State proposed to use an outside evaluation team to undertake a competitive validation study of the State's TQRIS to assess whether the tiers in the State's TQRIS accurately reflect differential levels of program quality. The applicant is relying on the evaluation team to design the evaluation and to help select appropriate measures with some overall input from the state. The proposal is ambitious, however not enough information was provided to know whether it will be achievable within the allotted time frame. The applicant has provided a timeline, however not enough information was provided within the timeline to assess whether the activities could actually be completed. For example, the applicant proposes to submit a proposal to the Institutional Review Board during the same time frame that it will be selecting an evaluator who will be charged with the task of designing the evaluation. Moreover, the applicant does not specify the qualifications of the evaluation team members, making it difficult to assess whether the proposed budget is sufficient for level and complexity of the task. The applicant has contracted with an outside evaluation team in the past and it would have been helpful if the state included a letter and description from the previous evaluator indicating the process of an evaluation, some measure outcomes, as well as the cost. In an attempt to discuss the validation process the state briefly touches on creating covariate measures to conduct an appropriate analysis. Due the lack of specificity of the design the comments appear to be premature. More information around evaluation and measurement would have been helpful prior to discussing this issue. Validating and constructing measures requires time and the ambitious goals set by the applicant will require a substantial amount of time to design, implement and evaluate. The applicant has not included a detailed timeline based on previous evaluations and pilot projects to assess whether proposed activities could be successfully completed. Given the complexity of the task and the outcomes that the applicant wishes to achieve, more detail would have been helpful.

### **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
<b>(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.</b>	30	24

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)**

As part of its proposal the State has provided copies of the State's Infant/Toddler and Preschool Early Learning guidelines that were developed to be developmentally, linguistically and culturally appropriate for children including English language learners and children with disabilities. The standards have been constructed to cover all domains necessary for school readiness and align with the Head Start framework. The State has provided evidence to demonstrate the alignment of standards across pre-k, kindergarten and 1st grade. To ensure use and access to the Early Learning and Development Standards the State has proposed to increase the dissemination of the standards by designing and distributing a more user-friendly document that can be given to educators and administrators who serve 3-5 year old children and their families. The new user-friendly documents would also be used to support professional development. In addition, new training modules and materials will also be developed to support the professional development of early childhood educators. All training materials would be developed to support developmentally appropriate experiences for all children. That said, the applicant has provided limited information on professional development for the infant and toddler workforce. Lack of this information is a problem as the state has chosen to focus on this particular group in helping to raise the quality of programs supporting the growth and development of young children. To increase the use and exposure of the infant/toddler standards the State proposes to distribute printed copies of the standards as well as to design an infant/toddler professional development system, using the pre-k system as a model. The State also proposes to refine and formalize the infant/toddler assessment system so as to create a common system to be used by infant/toddler programs. Furthermore, the work place knowledge and competency framework will be revised to incorporate the infant/toddler and pre-k Early Learning and Development Standards. Finally, to increase the use and exposure of the State's comprehensive framework for school readiness a website and marketing campaign will be launched. That said all of these strategies taken together should increase the quality of programs available to families with children with high needs. However, because children with high needs have not been explicitly defined in the application it is not clear whether any of these strategies will have an effect. Furthermore, the website may not be accessible to families who have the greatest need, and therefore they will not be served. The proposed project is the next logical step in the long term goal of the state to improve the quality of the workforce and increase the use of high quality standards across programs serving children with high needs birth through five. The State provides several letters of support from public and private agencies to support the work. While the State provides a timetable to support the development and implementation of the project, not enough specific information is provided as to the completion of the activities, making it difficult to assess whether the deadlines will be met. More information would have been helpful. The proposed plan is only partially implemented and therefore scored in medium range.

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.</b>	30	24

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 proposes to revise the existing program standards to include developmental screening, referrals and health literacy information for childcare providers. In addition, it is proposed that the standards be used to help families understand the importance of well-child care visits. The State also proposes to increase access to high quality professional development on health standards for the early childhood workforce and programs. This approach is reasonable because it builds upon the previous work of the State for which a foundation has been laid. If this goal is met, then children with high needs would have access to a more qualified workforce and programs that would support healthy development of children with high needs and their families. To ensure that the above goals are met the State proposes to develop a tracking system that will maintain professional development for all early childhood educators, early childhood program staff, and medical providers its working with programs and families. This is an appropriate step for the State as it proposes to expand and modify its data system. The State system already has a model; however it focuses on school age children and the goal is to expand the model to include the needs of children from birth through five years of age. The goal seems reasonable given the State's success with school-aged children. In addition to expanding the model the applicant proposes to increase professional development for the early childhood workforce to support nutrition and physical activity in young children. It proposes to support the use of evidence-based programs, such as the "I Am Moving, I am Learning" curriculum. This is a good choice for increasing professional development across the health standards as these programs have been used in other childcare settings with much success. The State, however, provides limited information as to how it will address the social and emotional needs of children, particularly those with special needs. More information would have been helpful in this area so as to balance the physical needs of children with their social and emotional needs. The applicant also proposes to increase the number of safe and appropriate playgrounds for children, to support physical activity, although little evidence is provided in the proposal as to why new playgrounds are needed. The applicant proposes that programs will apply for funds to purchase appropriate playground equipment for their communities based on scores received on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised. While this is a reasonable approach, acquiring separate pieces of equipment will not necessarily lead to a more integrated high quality play space which would ultimately be used to promote development. More information about this area would have been helpful. Finally, the state proposes to increase the number of children who receive high quality screenings by implementing a statewide developmental screening, tracking, and referral system for children birth through 5 years of age. This would include children from rural communities who are at risk for having significant health problems while often receiving inadequate care. This is a reasonable plan as it draws on a pre-existing initiative that has been used to ensure wellness screening, while simultaneously incorporating data from Medicaid, WVCHIP and the infant well-toddler screenings. If this goal is met the number of children with high needs served by the state will increase. In general, the plan meets the majority of the criteria for a high 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
<b>(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.</b>	40	34

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 proposed a systematic approach that will align competencies, credentials, and professional development across the State, which when taken together will improve the quality of the workforce. The State has proposed to review and revise the Core Knowledge and Career Pathways, incorporating within them the State's School Readiness Framework. The applicant has provided evidence within the proposal for existing Core Competencies that will undergo revision. The revision is a reasonable next step for the State because it will take into account all programs serving early learning and development, an improvement over the previous set of competencies. In addition, the applicant has proposed to collaborate with State post-secondary, institutions and other professional development organizations to align professional development with the states Core Knowledge and Competency Framework. Having said this, the applicant has indicated only working with one higher education coordinator which would not be enough to ensure the success and sustainability of the project. The applicant has also proposed to develop a common statewide progression of credentials and degrees that will be aligned with the workforce knowledge and competency framework. If these goals are met they will provide all stakeholders with information as to education, experience and credentials that are required across all early childhood settings and programs. Taken together these actions will lead to a plan that will enhance and produce a great early childhood workforce. The State has a track record in developing core competencies from its earlier work with the pre-k system. It has provided strong evidence that it has the capacity to produce an integrated system, however it is not clear from the proposed timeline whether the activities will be completed which are integral to the success of the project. More information would have been helpful. The applicant is building on a foundation that has been substantially implemented and therefore a majority of points were awarded.

**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
<b>(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>32</b>

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 sophisticated plan to develop a statewide comprehensive kindergarten assessment system in collaboration with the National Institute of Early Education Research has been proposed by the applicant. The system will build on the State's pre-k system. It will include all the essential domains of school readiness, align with the West Virginia content standards and objectives, be concurrent with early childhood assessments, and be employ the use of valid and reliable measures for all children, including English Language learners and children with disabilities. Data from the State's comprehensive kindergarten assessment system will be reported to the West Virginia Educational Information System, the State's Longitudinal Data system and early learning data system. The State has a good track record in building quality assessment systems; however, as part of this proposal the applicant has not provided sufficient documentation from the collaborators to ensure that the targets can be met. For example, the application includes one letter from a junior research professor from the National Institute of Early Education Research strongly supporting the project, but not specifying the relationship between the state and the

collaborator, or outlining the scope of work. Given the scope of the work that is involved in this project it would have been helpful for the applicant to include a letter from a more senior official outlining the specifics of the partnership. The State reports that the project will be funded significantly through the RTT-ELC grant. That said the State has contributed steady funding to support the program over the duration of the award. Since the state has reported no other outside funding sources it is difficult to assess the sustainability of the project. More information would have been helpful in this area. In addition, the timeline does not provide enough information to assess the completion of proposed tasks. Finally, the applicant does not provide a list of the personnel who would need to be involved in the project, making it difficult to assess whether the proposed budget would be adequate for the successful completion of the project. The success of this project is dependent upon all kindergarten teachers being trained on the system by 2014-2015 and the design and implementation of the online platform being completed. More information would have been helpful with respect to pilot data to assess whether these ambitious goals could be achieved.

	Available	Score
<b>Total Points Available for Selection Criteria</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>213</b>

**Priorities**

Competitive Preference Priorities

Priorities

	Available	Yes/No
<b>Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry</b>	<b>0 or 10</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<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>		
<b>Comments on (P)(3)</b>		
<p>The state has addressed E(1) and has earned a least 70 percent of the maximum points available for this criterion based on my review.</p>		

Absolute Priority

	Met? Yes/No
<b>Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs.</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<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>	
<b>Comments on Absolute Priority</b>	
<p>The State has demonstrated throughout the application how it will continue to build upon and modify its existing system to increase the quality of its Early Learning and Development programs serving children with high needs. That said, what the state has not provided is a clear definition of "children with high needs." This definition is critical to the success of the proposal as it drives where the resources are placed, as well as the expected targeted outcomes. Without such clarity it becomes difficult to assess whether or not the children with the greatest needs will be served. The State has provided a logic model that demonstrates how it plans to expand upon its existing infrastructure by describing the outputs as well as the impact it expects the grant to have on its Early Learning and Development System. The State has established both public and private partnerships to integrate</p>	

and align resources across the State's agencies as well as with private agencies to improve the quality of the early learning and development programs. Evidence for these partnerships was provided by the MOUs included in the proposal as well as the letters of support. Having said that, while the State has provided a logic model, the model does not provide enough information about how the State will move from one phase to another, thereby articulating an approach that is not as integrated as would be necessary to increase quality across programs for children with high needs. Finally, the State has addressed the criteria within the Focused Investment areas within its proposal that it has believed would strengthen the quality of its programs and support the success of children with high needs in its State. Again, because the State has not sufficiently defined children with high needs it becomes difficult to know whether the areas addressed under the Focused Investment areas will be able to increase access to high quality programs for children with high needs. That said, the State has submitted an application that demonstrates how it will improve quality in Early Learning and Development Programs that it believes will prepare children with high needs for kindergarten success based on its previous success in its State pre-kindergarten program, and therefore has provided some evidence of preparing children to begin school ready to succeed.



# Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



## Technical Review Form Page

Application # WV-5036

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]  
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]  
Support Monitor: [Redacted]  
Application Status: **Reviewed**  
Date/Time: **11/17/2011 - 11:30 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
<b>(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>
<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) (A) (a) Funding in West Virginia has continued to substantially increase for pre-k education since 2007. Spending in 2007 for state aid was \$47,338,804 and for 2011 spending is at \$78,843,055. In addition, per pupil spending has increased from \$4,881 in 2007 to \$5,521 in 2010. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) ranks West Virginia 10th in the nation for in-state spending per child and fourth relative to spending on pre-k. The spending on pre-k is significant because, overall, there has been a decline nationally on spending for pre-k education. (b) The pre-k enrollments of children with high needs have increased significantly in West Virginia by 39% from 5,193 in 2007 to 8,536 in 2010. According to the applicant, in-home family programs have increased from 737 children to 1,154 children. Children from low-income families from birth to kindergarten represent 52.6% of all children in the state. Other children who are identified with disabilities or developmental delays, English learners, in foster care or homeless represent a total of 15% of the children in West Virginia. While there is an increase in the state population of low-income children, there has been a decline in enrollment in Early Head Start and other CCDF Programs. (c) West Virginia has established a great deal in its effort to continue to expand and implement legislation, policies and practices supporting Early Learning and Development programs. Supportive policies exist from the West Virginia Board of Education and its Division of Early Education and the Department of Health and Human Services. Having these policies in place will be very helpful in furthering the state's effort to coordinate and align early learning efforts to implement the proposed plan. (d) There are some policies already in place to build a foundation for development of a quality early learning development system. These include expanded use of West Virginia's Universal Access to a Quality Early Education System, Early Learning Standards Framework, and Content Standards and Learning Criteria for West Virginia Pre-Kindergarten. The standards include the necessary domains for creating a quality pre-K program. The Content Standards for pre-k-4 include standards for wellness, which are important to address to assure that children are healthy and ready for learning. The Standards For Infants and Toddlers are of high quality and are rigorous. The Quality Rating and Improvement System and Child Resource and Referral developed by the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) Division of Care Education provide support for the development of quality Early Learning Programs. The Early Learning Standards were developed in 2010.

progressively for infants and toddlers. The Standards for Infant and Toddlers allow for adaptation for cultural, developmental and linguistic differences. Legislation as outlined in the proposal, addresses licensing for professionals, paraprofessionals, Family and Child Care Centers, professional development, health, nutrition, family engagement and approaches to the various learning domains. A Comprehensive Assessment System is being developed that includes Screening Measures, Formative Assessment Measures and Measures of Quality Adult Interactions. The state has done a good job in aligning to the various standards and early learning tools, which has taken place through the collaboration of the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) and the West Virginia Department of Human Services (WVDHHS) with input from others across the state. Legislation is in place that requires the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) to implement a Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) for all types of child care programs. There is a plan outlined in the proposal for the implementation of the assessment system. The system is to include the Tiered Comprehensive Program Standards aligned with the West Virginia Universal Pre-K Program Standards and measurable standards to address all three types of child care facilities and pre-k programs. The measurements are to be aligned with the Standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The system will include the WV Kindergarten Learning Scale and articulation of the next generation Wellness Content Standards to determine each child's physical growth and development. This will be important to inform workers on ways to improve health and wellness of pre-school learners. There is not enough clarity in the plan to distinguish between all children and those referenced as being high needs. There is no explanation on how children are being served with regards to programs such as Title I and IDEA pre-k-learning and developmental services, and how these programs will be impacted by using the assessment program. The new infrastructure that is proposed is well positioned to help coordinate many of the state's resources and services. In the past, the state has made positive strides in the implementation of the pre-k assessment and in the area of childcare, but does not present how these accomplishments will influence the focus of the proposed plan. The data and information, as presented in the proposal, does not show evidence that the various tools that are in place have had an impact on kindergarten readiness, nor does it show how it will be used to accomplish the targets set for 2015. The state does have some excellent building blocks in place toward development of a system that will increase success in kindergarten readiness.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.</b>	20	15

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)**

Comments on (A)(2) The WV State Plan was derived using the logic model to delineate and target goals for the proposal. The elements of the model, as presented in the proposal, are clear and show inputs and activities for all agencies and groups that must be involved and committed to achieve the plan's goals. The state convened the Early Learning and Development Council along with work groups to develop the plan. According to the applicant, the assets of the State's high quality pre-k programs, as evidenced by having increased readiness of children with high needs through the Ready, Set, Go! Program framework, set the direction of the plan. The Ready, Set, GO! Program uses a comprehensive approach that includes common standards, shared approaches to guide agencies, schools, communities and families to help all children to enter kindergarten healthy and ready to learn. The broad, goals are ambitious and achievable are "to increase the number of state programs that serve under-served infants and toddlers to participate in high quality tiered learning and improvement system, along with incentives to enhance progress and higher levels of quality" and "to create a better educated and experienced early childhood workforce, developed as a result of new collaborations with higher education and current Early Childhood Educators." The ultimate impact, according to the applicant, is to "promote school readiness for Children with High Needs." Accomplishment of the goals and the objectives of the plan accomplishments will be contingent on the various agencies working together collaboratively, if the Comprehensive Assessment System is developed and implemented as outlined in the proposal. According to the applicant, the State economic, health and education indicators, which are well below the national average, creates a sense of urgency to better serve high needs children and to close the achievement gap that exists between groups of students. There was no mention of ways to assure that programs and services are adapted or modified for special populations of children in special needs categories. The plan gives high priority to the dissemination of the WV Early Learning Standards Framework Content Standards and Learning Criteria for WV Pre-K in a form that the Office of School Readiness (OSR) website. The new Standards will be critical to the professional development strategies and is to be implemented as an outcome of the Logic Model Rubric. The WV Professional Development has been developed by the Pre-K Continuous Quality Advisory Committee for the primary purpose of integrating and implementing the strategies within the classroom. The system is to provide opportunities for all educators, administrators and families to understand what best practices are necessary for successful learning. The plan does not include

specific strategies or objectives on what will be done differently to close the gap between children with high needs and their peers. The plan does not include specific strategies or objectives on what will be done differently to close the gap between children with high needs and their peers. The plan does not present clear rationale as to why the primary focus will be on the early childcare centers.

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

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 Office of the Secretary of Education and the Arts, as presented on the organizational chart in the proposal, is the lead agency for coordination and management of the fiscal aspects of the grant. The Early Childhood Advisory Council which has been operating by executive order since 2010 includes representatives from many of the state and federal programs that serve or provide support to 0-pre-k programs in West Virginia. The Council was established in compliance with The Head Start Act requirements of 2007, and does require representation of parents. Decision-making and dispute resolutions are to follow the established by-laws of the Council and Robert's Rules of Order will be followed. If there is a tie vote, the Chair, who is the Secretary of Education and the Arts, will make the deciding vote. This structure will be an asset to the state in achieving the proposed goals. Memorandum of Understanding are attached from the Department of Health and Human Service, the Division of Early Care and Education along with other state early childhood program and associations expressing their support for the plan. The letters were more general and did not detail specifics about contributions to the



implementation of the plan. Letters are also attached with signatures from the various organizations that are listed as members of the Advisory Council as well as other supporting agencies including the Federation of Teachers, the Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, universities and other community outreach and nonprofit organizations that have some interest or role in helping to serve the targeted population. The signed letters in general show their commitment and support for the proposed plan to better meet the needs of high needs pre-k children. There were no letters of support from school districts/counties or school administrators organizations, although they will need to play a significant role to effectively implement the proposed plan of action. In order to implement the proposed strategies, support and involvement will be needed by this large group of administrators. The State of West Virginia has developed its plan using the logic model process to delineate projects, inputs, participants, outputs, outcomes and the impact of the identified strategies to lead to a successful collaborative system. The overarching goal is to promote school readiness for high needs children. State departments and state-level programs are included in the plan. A realistic timeline is provided to begin with hiring of the needed staff to lead the coordination effort as a member of the Staff of the Early Childhood Advisory Council. A group of regional coordinators will assist in the implementation and training to help facilitate accomplishment of the goals. It is also unclear what role the Governor's Office of Technology will play, and how it will interface with the EEC since it is listed as a responsible entity for the TQRIS. Since efforts of the plan are to increase quality service for the high needs populations, which is 56% of the total early childhood population, it would seem that an evaluation criteria section should be articulated within the logic model process about specific groups and their needs, rather than be generalized with all programs and services. Overall the plan lacks coherence on how the various elements will fit together to build and implement an effective reform agenda. There were no explanations why groups such as local districts did not include letters of support, and why there is not a stronger effort to coordinate training and development with Institutions of Higher Education. Building relationships with both of these groups will be helpful in trying to increase quality services for early learners.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>

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 budget presented by the applicant does a reasonable job in identified some of the existing state, federal and grant funds that are to be used to support the plan. Benedum Foundation is identified to contribute \$90,000 during the first year and Carnegie Science Center is to contribute \$50,000 through 2014. New money is identified from the state in Table (A) (4) totaling \$6,923,252 through 2015. In addition to the new state money identified, 12 new state-funded regulatory and monitoring staff will be added to respond to the new demands described in the proposal. A significant proportion of the proposed grant funds will be used to develop and disseminate tools, professional development and training and creating hundreds of playgrounds in community areas that will be accessible to High Needs Children. There is no set-aside or identified incentive funds to address the increased unique training that will be needed to engage in family development related to school readiness for specific high need children and communities. The items presented in the budget for funding are limited to education funds, new grant dollars and not-for profit resource dollars. There is a lack of clear alignment of other state resources that are to support financing the plan. It was difficult to assess the degree that the budget will support all of the activities presented in the plan, and no information was presented to describe how funding will be sustained after the grant period. In general, projected costs seem reasonable and necessary.

**B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs**

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	10	8
<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"> <li>(1) Early Learning and Development Standards;</li> <li>(2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;</li> <li>(3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;</li> <li>(4) Family engagement strategies;</li> <li>(5) Health promotion practices; and</li> <li>(6) Effective data practices;</li> </ul> <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>In 2009, legislation was passed that requires the Department of Health and Human Resources to implement a tiered quality rating and improvement system for all types of child care programs. In addition, the State Code requires that the system include program standards that include (a)(1),(2),and (3), accountability measures, financial incentives and a major public awareness campaign. The existing State Tiered Program Standards are aligned with the WV Universal Pre-K Program standards, Federal Head Start standards and state guidelines governing the operation of programs funded under Part C and Section 619 of Part B of IDEA and state and pre-k programs. The state has developed an excellent set of Core Knowledge and Competency Standards that are aligned to Early Learning Standards Framework. The The Core Knowledge Competency Standards are used to guide the development of Early Childhood Professionals, and are aligned to the National Association for Education of Young Children's Standards for programs, and in-home family child-care standards. These standards are all available and accessible online. The Comprehensive Assessment System has not been realized. Measurable standards are to be aligned with nationally recognized standards for child care facilities, family care homes and family child care facilities. Key activities to develop the Comprehensive Assessment System are detailed in the logic model rubric and correspond to the projected timelines to be in place after the fourth year of the project. The standards are to include screening measures formative assessment, measures of environmental quality and measures of adult interactions. Workgroups have been identified and are listed in the plan to assist in accomplishing the related tasks to complete steps to finalize the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. The plan did not present how the groups will interface together and specifically what areas of assessment the group or subgroups will address. While the new legislation will play a significant role to manage leadership responsibilities presented in the proposal, there is no mention of what workforce licensures will be affected by the proposed system. There is no information in the plan about how the system will relate to high expectations consistent with nationally recognized standards.</p>

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	15	10
<p>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--</p> <p>(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--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) State-funded preschool programs;</li> <li>(2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;</li> <li>(3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;</li> </ul>		

(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)**

Implementation of the state plan will include contracting with a public relations firm to assure greater awareness and understanding about the importance of the Tiered Quality and Improvement System. Emphasis will be placed on helping child care programs improve their children's readiness levels as measured by the already mandated WV Universal Pre-K Program. Currently the WV Department of Health and Human Resources offers two tiers for payment reimbursement. As the state transitions to the Comprehensive System, all DHHR programs will be reimbursed on a four-star tiered system payment. Two-star programs will receive an additional \$2 per child; three-star programs will receive an additional \$3 per child; and four-star programs will receive an additional \$4 per child. The plan included projections for the increase in the percentage of programs participating in the Tiered Quality and Improvement System through 2015. The 1,855 Family Child Care Home programs have 0.3% currently participating, and by the end of year four, are projected to increase by 4.3%. There were 106 Family Child Care Facilities identified and are projected to increase by 27%. The largest increase for participation after 2015, is the 361 Child Care Centers programs in the state, and is projected to increase from 14% currently to 43%. According to the applicant, the increased access to information about programs is expected to expand the supply of high-quality programs, but how this is to occur is not presented. Information is to be included in the public information campaign about how families with high needs can apply for subsidies and how to obtain quality ratings for programs in their communities. There are no specific strategies other than information through the public relations firm to address other issues such as affordability, incentives or access to promote more program participation and quality in high need communities. The proposed plan projections to increase the percentage of programs utilizing the TQRIS presented for attainment after the four-year grant period seems very ambitious and will likely be difficult to achieve without some support to sustain efforts after the grant has ended. The system is grounded on a voluntary basis with funding incentives for programs being awarded to those that rate at the top tier. This approach will likely not influence parents, particularly of high needs children, to participate in such programs. There are no baseline data included in the plan to show the targeted number of high needs children in current state programs including those funded through the Department of Health and Human Services. Specific strategies to increase participation of high needs children in high quality programs, based on the TQRIS was not presented.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs</b>	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 state does have a set of Tiered Comprehensive Program Standards (TQRIS) that are aligned with the WV Universal Pre-K Program Standards. The Head Start Programs, and Part C and Section 619 of Part B of IDEA operations are currently governed by the TQRIS program standards. The West Virginia Plan indicates that various valid tools will be selected to be used to train and monitor early learning development programs on site. The use of self-assessments as a part of the system will be helpful in gaining support from members of the workforce. The first year is to be devoted to securing two state-level staff to serve as anchor evaluators who in turn will train other evaluators to respond to the anticipated increase in Early Learning Development Programs participating in the TQRIS during the period of the grant. The anchor evaluators are to be trained through the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The evaluators are to increase by two each year for a total of twelve new monitors. According to the applicant,

evaluators will be required to have a degree in early education, as well as training on the evaluation tool. Monitoring is to include the use of two accountability measures including the tier process and use of an Environmental Rating Scale at on-site inspections at least once annually. This support is a creative idea that will help to assure that the state will be using reliable processes for monitoring and rating pre-k-school centers and programs. Evaluations are to be conducted on 50% of all center classrooms, with a minimum of one class per age group in each child care center. This training system is not presented as evidence based, and would be a strategy that could be implemented with the Institutions of Higher Education in West Virginia. An information system for the TQRIS is to be created using grant funds. The system is to allow for use by multiple agencies. The system is also to be used to inform instruction and practice, generate licensing information for child care consumers related to cost of care, availability of care, and other information appropriate to determining quality and improvement outcomes for children. The web-based information management system will include information about the purpose and provide ratings and licensing histories of care providers in the State. The proposed web-based management information system is supposed to inform families about factors related to Early Learning and Development Programs. Efforts are not presented to show how the rating system will be used to help parents make decisions about the selection of their children's early learning program. Since proposed and current standards are to be aligned with the WV Early Learning Standards for Pre-K, and the fact that the Advisory Council is the lead entity and is housed in the WV DE, it may be more efficient to expand the current information system rather than creating and budgeting for a totally new information system.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>

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 Early Learning Advisory Council is well structured to oversee the implementation of policies, procedures, practices and incentives geared toward improving the state's pre-K programs. The RTT-ELC grant funds will be used to increase funding to care providers as an incentive for them to move up in the tier ratings. The state's proposal also indicates that financial help will be used as an incentive for gaining national accreditation. Currently there are only 24 licensed child care centers accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This number represents 7% of child care centers in the state. One program is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Family Child Care (NAFCC). The availability of funds to help increase the number of programs in the top tier will be publicized as a part of the public relations firm's responsibilities. The WV DHHR funds two scholarship programs through the Teacher Education and Compensation (T.E.A.C.) program. One-hundred thousand dollars is set aside in the CCDF fund provided to the Higher Education Policy Commission to support scholarships for Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist graduates. The reader could not discern the actual number of high needs children within the 7% of programs in the top tiered level. There were no specific objectives or descriptions to address the needs of working parents or about full year programs. The plan does not include what criteria will be used to award the mentioned scholarships. There are no definitions in the plan to describe high needs children. Information about specific strategies to address the needs of high needs children is not included in the proposal as well. The plan stresses service for "all" children rather than discussing how pre-learning programs will be modified or adapted to respond to the unique needs of individual children, particularly those that are high needs.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>

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)**

Consistent with good research practices, the applicant plans to employ an external evaluator through a competitive bid process to evaluate the State’s Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. The evaluator is to have a record of successfully conducting evaluations of early childhood programs, practices and policies. The evaluator is also to demonstrate knowledge of the TQRIS systems. The research design proposal, in keeping with the excellent planning process, will be required to correspond to the logic model using a vigorous validation of both formative and summative data and processes. Using an outside evaluator will be a good investment for the state. According to the applicant, the two questions of the validation process are: “1) determining concurrent validity of the established measures of early childcare program quality against the QRIS ratings, and 2) demonstrating that QRIS ratings are positively associated with children’s outcomes for children served by the state’s early learning and development programs with special attention to outcomes for children with high needs.” The above questions are not clearly articulated, and the applicant indicates that the successful bidder will be required to formulate the research questions. The evaluator is to begin by selecting a representative sample of sites including various types of childcare facilities within the state, including the star ratings and by regions. The evaluation is to secure relevant data from the information system and also from other sources including measures of high need as an independent variable relative to the early childhood outcome measures. The evaluator will be required to show evidence of alignment in the form of new or existing research that meets standards of internal and external validity. The criteria utilized by the evaluator will include data from multiple measures including periodic direct observations and will take in to account perceptions of parents, staff, and other relevant stakeholders regarding the quality of services provided at each site. During the first year, the evaluator will select a representative sample of sites stratified by provider type (i.e. homes, childcare facilities, and school programs), and star ratings, by regions. These ratings are to be compared to TQRIS ratings using statistically valid methodology and agreement statistics will be published as part of the validation study. Evaluation reports are to published beginning in project year 3. During Project Year 1, the contractor, in collaboration with the TQRIS committee, is to identify a set of measurable outcomes for children that are developmentally appropriate, such as level of school readiness, health and fitness, behavior indicators and improved social and emotional skills. Once the validity of the TQRIS is established, the Evaluation will focus on questions of predictive validity of the TQRIS relative to the various outcome measures. Given the tasks, timeline and goals for validating the TQRIS, the funding that is identified for this project and securing of an external evaluator probably is not sufficient.

**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.	30	20

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)**

Comments on (C)(1) The West Virginia Early Learning and Development Standards which were developed in 2010 by diverse experts from across the state, are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate. All essential domains are included in standards. The standards, which can be viewed online, appear to be thoughtful, scientifically research-based, and can serve as a framework to address the needs of individuals and communities. Standards have been aligned to the K-3 learning standards. The standards include performance indicators and instructional/delivery options. Race to the Top funds are to be used to develop training models and materials correlated to the standards for all early childhood educators including special education educators. There are two domains that will need to be developed for professional development purposes. The plan for this activity is to be accomplished by the WVDE's Office of School Readiness in collaboration with the Office of Special Education, Head Start and West Virginia Universities. The Pre-K Early Learning Standards Professional Development System was designed by the WVDE Pre-K Continuous Quality Improvement Advisory Council to improve program quality by integrating the Pre-K Learning Standards into classroom practices, and increasing administrators' understanding of the standards. The professional development training is also aimed at ways to engage families in standards-based experiences. A key activity of the plan is to increase dissemination of the state's Early Learning and Development Standards to promote greater awareness and increase developmentally appropriate integration into all learning programs. The plan does not present enough information about how the standards will be disseminated to engage parents of high needs children. The standards are to be used as a basis for Core Competencies for training of the workforce, but the plan lacked detail on how this training will be offered throughout the state to childcare providers.

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>

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)**

Grant funds are to be used to revise the TQRIS standards to include developmental screening, referral, health literacy for child care providers, early intervention services that are provided in homes of children with high needs and those with current development and assessment referrals. This strategy will be very useful for improving and expanding center and home-based early learning services. The WV Plan includes expansion of the Coordinated School-Public Health Partnership model to provide technical support and training to early childhood programs. Activities in the plan include expansion of the Governor's Kids First Initiative to include the entire birth to five populations relative to their WV Medical Health Check (EPSDT). Targeted training and technical assistance will be designed specifically for healthcare providers. The professional development support is to focus on integration of health standards in early childhood programs. The CSHSP effort is currently focused on school-aged children. Funding of this area will allow awareness and professional development efforts to take place at state conferences such as the Head Start Conference and the Growing Healthy Conference. Training and development is to take place at both home-based and facility centers as well. According to the applicant, all participating early education programs will install links from their websites to the Health Check website. The medical records of children ages 0-5 will be linked and coordinated to program standards that support positive social and emotional development. The WV Office of Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting was recently awarded, through a competitive process, a grant to develop and implement an ASQ:3 developmental screening and tracking process for children birth through five who are participating in the state's home visiting program. These funds will be complementary and supportive toward improving the use of medical records' information to inform care givers and pre-k providers. A major strategy of the WV Plan is to develop and install playground equipment in communities to allow for access to children in high needs communities as a way of promoting and expanding physical activity. There was no rationale or explanation in the plan about why this grant will be helpful to the State in attaining its proposed goals. A process is to be designed to allow programs to apply for playground equipment for their facilities. Results from the environmental rating, which is to be a part of the Comprehensive Assessment System, will be required as a condition for applying for the funds. Grant funds to support the plan component total \$2,546,000 over the four year grant period. If attention could be made to align specific outcomes from the wellness standards to the role of quality physical activity in preparing children for kindergarten readiness, the grants for playground equipment would be better aligned with the overall goals of the 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
<b>(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>30</b>
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 state plan stresses the challenge that the state has regarding its Early Learning and Development workforce, particularly as it relates to knowledge and competency. The state has a set of Core Knowledge and Competencies for Early Care and Education Professionals and progression of credentials. The plan will use grant funds to convene work groups including representatives from all early education programs, higher education and professional organizations to review and revise the Core Knowledge and Competencies, and Career Pathway to be aligned with the Ready, Set, Go! WV Readiness Framework. The group is to include representatives from programs serving children with high needs based on low income, disabilities, English language learners, as well as migrant, homeless and foster care children. Family members representing high needs groups are also to be recruited to serve on the workgroups. The outcomes for the work group include revision of the Core Knowledge and Competencies for all Early Care and Education Professionals, publishing of the revised set, development of a training module and tool kit for early educators, and training for individuals in technical assistance roles in the various early childhood programs. The applicant is to incorporate universal strategies to promote development of positive social and emotional development. A Guide to Effective Consultation and Settings Serving Infants, Toddlers and Their Families; Core Knowledge, Competencies, and Dispositions, published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families and the Early Childhood Education Professional Development Training, and Technical Assistance Glossary, published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, will be used as resources to assure that the strategies apply to all settings and to children with high needs. The state plan lacks coherence relative to connecting all of its

standards and tools to establish and support levels of performance and compensation of those that work in early childhood programs. The plan lacks details how the licensure system will be improved to align with development and training related to the various members of the workforce.

### 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
<b>(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>28</b>
<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)

Comments on (E)(2) The state plans to use funds from the proposed grant to collaborate with the National Institute for Early Education Research to design a kindergarten entry assessment instrument which include all the essential domains of School Readiness, be aligned to the WV Kindergarten Content Standards and Objectives. The design is to be appropriate for use with different ethnic, racial and linguistic groups, developmental levels, ages and multiple domains of development. According to the applicant, the process for reporting the information is to be a part of the Longitudinal Data System. It is unclear how the current universal pre-k assessment will be aligned to the new information system. The information included in the plan about work within WVDE including a researcher, a programmer, research assistant and 8.5 FTE's to provide technical assistance and training for capacity building will be supported with state funding. The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) will use funds from Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge to ensure that beginning in the 2014-2015 year, that kindergarten teachers will be trained to administer the West Virginia Child Assessment System (WV K-CAS) to all kindergartners. The assessment is to be administered during the first several weeks of kindergarten. The funds will support the design and implementation of an online platform on the current reporting system already in place for the Child Assessment System. The kindergarten teachers will be trained to utilize the Child Accomplishments Summary Report for Families of Kindergarten children. The report for families is to be user-friendly and specific to their child's development at kindergarten entry. The WVDE maintains an information system for input of data from the WV K-CAS that provides a platform for language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, social and emotional development. The WVDE also is to develop a timeline to ensure state wide implementation of K-CAS beginning with the 2014-2015 school years. The status of children's development and kindergarten entry will be updated on a yearly basis and published to show local and state levels levels of kindergarten readiness. The plan presented in the proposal contains reasonable timelines to achieve implementation and dissemination of information from the system of the WV K-CAS relative to kindergarten entry. The Information and data from all of the state's school districts is to begin to be published at the end of the second year of the project. The state plans to use funds from the proposed grant to collaborate with the National Institute for Early Education Research to design a kindergarten entry assessment instrument which will include all the essential domains of School Readiness, to be aligned to the WV Kindergarten Content Standards and Objectives. The design is to be appropriate for use with different ethnic, racial, language, developmental levels, age and multiple domains of development. According to the applicant, the process for reporting the information is to be a part of the Longitudinal Data System. It is unclear how the current universal pre-k assessment will be aligned within this information system. The information in the plan about use of data to inform instruction is lacking in coherence as it relates to using the proposed system statewide. Staffing to work within the WVDE including a researcher, a programmer, research assistant and 8.5 FTEs to provide technical assistance and training for capacity building



will be supported with state funding. According to the applicant, funds from the Race to-the Top will support contracts for evaluation and psychometric needs. The state will also provide funds for teacher stipends for training beginning in the 2014-2015 school year to assure that children take the assessment during the first several weeks of school. The plan did not include how funding from other state and federal resources will be available for use under this grant. The (e) chart only shows how the grant funding will be allocated to support the project.

	Available	Score
<b>Total Points Available for Selection Criteria</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>204</b>

**Priorities**

Competitive Preference Priorities

Priorities

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

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)**

The West Virginia Early Learning and Development Standards is the only element that is currently in place. These were developed in 2010 and are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate. The plan provided no information or data to demonstrate that the state has a clear understanding about the percentage of children who demonstrate readiness for kindergarten. There are no data provided to determine the quality of the kindergarten universal assessment. The Standards, which can be viewed online are thoughtful; scientifically research based and serve as a framework to address the needs of individual needs and communities. The standards have been aligned with the K-3 learning standards. Currently there is no mechanism in place to disseminate the information about the Kindergarten Entry Assessment. The state addresses selection criterion (E)(1) and earned a score of at least 70%, therefore meeting competitive Preference 3(b).

Absolute Priority

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

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**

The plan articulates activities and a timeline to build and implement a Comprehensive Assessment System that is to evolve out of a new infrastructure that is to promote collaboration across agencies. Agencies are to use common standards and incentives to promote quality professional development, and some steps were listed they may be used to build and expand a workforce ladder program through universities and colleges. Creating and improving the early learning workforce through training and development of the state's early learning workforce is not well presented in the proposed plan. The targeted percentage of growth in the use of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by 2015 seems attainable, but is at a very low level of expectation. Revising the funding structure to support awarding grants based on the top tiers of TQRIS, should be a motivation to increase

quality for early learning outcomes. The plan does call for awarding grants to centers for playground equipment that are located in communities of high needs children. If the plan would make a connection to wellness outcomes, and the relationship to children's learning, perhaps funding grants for playground equipment, will be more inline with the overall goals to increase kindergarten readiness for children with high needs. There were no other specific strategies to address improved learning for the various high need categories such as those that are English learners, those identified in certain special education categories, and for parent training to help them prepare their children for kindergarten success.



# Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

## Technical Review Form Page



Application # WV-5036

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]  
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]  
Support Monitor: [Redacted]  
Application Status: **Reviewed**  
Date/Time: 11/15/2011 - 9:20 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
<b>(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development</b>	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**

#### Comments on (A)(1)

West Virginia has demonstrated its commitment and investment in Early Learning and Development Programs through its steadily increased financial investments from 2002. Tables (A) (1-4) state funding has increased as did spending per child with the increased enrollment. To demonstrate West Virginia's commitment to a coherent system supported through legislation, policies, and practices, the state provided Supplemental Table (A)(1)(c) with a description of current policies. The information was in an easy to read format which helped decision-making on the commitment and coherence of the system infrastructure supporting Early Learning and Development Programs. WVA demonstrated its commitment to early learning through its continued financial support, programs, and legislation expanding support for Early Learning and Development Programs. As part of its past commitment to early learning and development West Virginia provided the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) rankings to further support the work in the 3 and 4 year old area. The Zero to Three was cited for the adoption of early learning standards for infants and toddlers as part of the groundwork in this area. West Virginia provided background on each of the Early Learning and Development Standards Birth to five. The state cited the alignment of The Early Learning and Development Standards for Infant and Toddler with the Pre-K, Head Start, Positive Child Outcomes and Kindergarten-Grade 3 content standards. West Virginia cited its ten year history of universal Pre-K programs to demonstrate improvements on school readiness indicators among Children with High Needs. A study of the effects of the Pre-K on school readiness indicators among Children with High Needs by Lamy, Barnett, & Jung (2005) demonstrated its past success with increases in vocabulary development, understanding of print concepts, and early mathematics skills. The status of the children that participated in the WV Pre-K program demonstrated improved skills upon entry. West Virginia's plan to upgrade the program demonstrates the continuing commitment to quality programs for early learning and development. Summaries of current status with expansion needs in Comprehensive Assessment Systems, Kindergarten Entry Assessment System, and effective data practices within the Quality Rating and Improvement System (TORIS) management information system are provided. West Virginia did demonstrate its quality commitment to Early Learning and Development Programs. Table (A) (1)-11 displays only sixteen (16) graduates from post-secondary institutions and no data available from its community college system. Although WV did indicate that data management was

one of the areas to address, it seems as though the community colleges could have counted the number of credentials provided in a one year period to provide for the application. This raises the issue of collaborative and cooperative mission across the post-secondary system with the Pre K-12 system which did reduce the scoring in this area. Although the state listed Children with High Needs as its priority in services, the state did not specifically define this population. West Virginia completed required tables but did not explain or discuss who were the Children with High Needs in the state with a clear description that allowed the reviewer to have a clear picture during the evaluation of this section.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals.</b>	20	18

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)

West Virginia provided a direction for its reform agenda by building on the current success while extending components to infant and toddler and addressing specific gaps identified. A study of the effects of the Pre-K on school readiness indicators among Children with High Needs by Lamy, Barnett, & Jung (2005) demonstrated its past success with a rationale on the goals, plan, and rationale for Focused Investment Areas. West Virginia demonstrated that its plan constitutes an effective reform agenda with a clear path based on its current program successes and identified needs due to its Pre-K foundation of success. Most of the plan focused on improving child care settings since this was the area identified that did not have the foundation that was evident in the Pre-K programs. The Ready, Set, Go! WV comprehensive school readiness is a good base on which to add components for expansion to other populations because it has an infrastructure plan to build new program areas. West Virginia identified five goals to improve program quality setting ambitious but achievable goals related to improving program quality statewide, improving child outcomes, and closing the achievement gap. West Virginia's rationale did indicate specific Focused Investment Areas based on its statewide plan. The use of Supplemental Table (A)(2)-1 to demonstrate the High Quality Plan provides a roadmap of goal areas, activities, participants, responsibilities, outputs, and outcomes. West Virginia demonstrated a High Quality Plan through the use of supplemental tables highlighting the selected approach to reform.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State</b>	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)**

West Virginia detailed in its High Quality Plan the governance and organization structure to facilitate coordination and implementation. The Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) will assume lead agency responsibility and oversight for the grant activities and funds and include representation of all Participating Agencies. Decision making and dispute resolution will follow the bylaws of the ECAC and build on the requirements of the Head Start Act thereby building on existing structures. West Virginia demonstrated Participating agencies demonstrated commitment to the plan by leveraging existing funding and resources outlined in the scope of work by each agency. While the statement of work was included, West Virginia did not demonstrate defined responsibilities which is reflected in the scoring. As the first activity, West Virginia identified hiring an Early Learning Challenge Project Director (Coordinator) necessary for the management across agencies. Hiring a project director for management of the program is an appropriate strategy, however there is inconsistent use of the term director and coordinator which are very different in role responsibilities. While cooperation is important, someone must be appointed to assume responsibilities and management of the program which West Virginia demonstrated by hiring a Project Director as the first activity. While this is an excellent start, West Virginia may want to consider additional project management staff, not just training and regional staff for effective implementation and to delineate the role between the Executive Manager and the RTT-ELC Project Director on the Organizational Chart on page 72. West Virginia is inconsistent in its terminology and role for the project director, coordinator, executive manager which leads the reviewer to question the management role delineation for the position. The Participating State Agencies and broad group of stakeholders demonstrated commitment to the plan with its letters identifying leverage of existing resources. While letters were provided, there were very few from districts to demonstrate commitment to the plan. It will benefit West Virginia to revisit the commitments in the initial stages to ascertain if any revisions are necessary.

	Available	Score
<b>(A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant.</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>

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)**

West Virginia continues its strong financial commitment to Pre-K as well as aligning other funding sources to serve the overarching state plan outlined in the proposal. The Budget seems adequate to support many of the activities outlined. West Virginia may wish to consider its personnel for coordination and management to ensure that it has sufficient staff to manage the program. Professional development costs seem low compared to the needs in implementing the TQRIS, Kindergarten Entry Assessment, and data analysis. The largest cost center is the TQRIS development, increasing participation, monitoring, validation, and incentives for tier progression. West Virginia may want to reexamine this area to ensure that there is a direct tie to child outcomes for this investment. West Virginia detailed the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies to carry out the plan. The lack of funding for partners at the local implementation to carry out the activities designed at the state level detracted from the scoring. It is not clear how the State may sustain this work after federal funding ends since such a large part of the costs were for the development and start up of the TQRIS which is not operational until late in grant cycle.

**B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs**

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	10	8

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)**

West Virginia has tiered program standards covering its Early Learning and Development Programs. The Cost Implementation Study (July, 2011) on the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) prepared for the Legislature, Child Care Advisory Council, and others by the Center for Business and Economic Research at Marshall University provides a road map for the state. Currently, West Virginia does not have two of the necessary Programs Standards: Comprehensive Assessment System and effective data practices as elements in the TQRIS but will address them through this grant. Three types of child care facilities will be included in the TQRIS: family child care homes(4 to 6 children), family child care facilities (7-12), and child care centers (13 or more children). The three types of child care facilities are linked to the licensing system. West Virginia uses a four star rating system to represent the four tiers of quality requiring programs to meet all requirements in the lower tiers before moving up to a higher tier. West Virginia identified the system as voluntary. The amount of funding and personnel for a system that is not mandatory does not appear to move WV into a comprehensive statewide system. Requirements for four star programs include national accreditation, West Virginia demonstrated that it incorporates program quality as defined by national recognized standards. However, the cost and time associated with national accreditation does not seem warranted during the start up of this system. Family incentives, convenience, and access are not addressed which lowered the scoring. There was no plan provided on access to services, such as what incentives are available for families to access quality over convenience.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</b>	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)

West Virginia has a High Quality Plan to maximize participation in the State's Tiered Quality and Rating Improvement System (TQRIS) through a public relations campaign and incentives. While providing a public relations campaign will provide some publicity around the program, it is not clear from the grant that these incentives will increase participation since there are no incentives for families. In this transition to the four-star tiered TQRIS, a tiered reimbursement of an additional \$4 daily per child fee is available at the highest level for those child care programs involved in the TQRIS while \$3 daily is available for the 3 star level, and \$2 daily is available at the 2 star level. West Virginia did indicate that this daily fee is only available to participating agencies in the TQRIS which is an incentive to participate. West Virginia did not state if it will evaluate the increased reimbursement to ascertain its impact on tiered participation and after reviewing the data, the state should determine if another approach is needed. Currently, West Virginia has a system of tiered reimbursement with two tiers of payment. While the participation rates are low, WV did provide national data (Child Trends and Mathematics Policy Research 2010) which supported the achievable goals. Since West Virginia is limiting itself to one incentive for participation, it may wish to review the data closely to determine if additional incentives are needed to reach the participation rates. WV did not provide sufficient strategies or sufficient increases in the TQRIS for success. This is a significant budgeted cost area with minor increases listed in the performance measure. There was no specific information on how this addressed Children with High Needs. A statement that families of Children with High Needs will have increased access through an expanded supply did not provide sufficient information which reduced the scoring in this area.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs</b>	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)**

West Virginia and its Participating State Agencies will develop and validate a system to monitor the Early Learning and Development Programs while making the results accessible to the public stakeholders. West Virginia has a partially implemented plan with all elements included as required. However, West Virginia did not provide many options for making the information available to families, especially those without computer access. The training protocol and vendor, monitoring frequency and public information plan supports the system. Rationale information provided through citations of selected articles supported the decision-making for the tool use, frequency, and communication. As a result of the research, West Virginia selected ERS and receives training from the Frank Porter Center in administration. West Virginia did demonstrate appropriate investment in training in the administration of the assessment. West Virginia TQRIS monitoring includes the use of two accountability measures: annual determinations of tier level and the use of Environmental Rating Scales(ERS) by trained evaluators. Additional evaluators will be hired to the current staff to monitor the programs and demonstrate inter-rater reliability of 85% or higher on the tool. A web based monitoring provider management system will track provider regulatory functions and TQRIS activities which allows the Participating Agencies to access and input the data. West Virginia demonstrates its coordination with the Participating Agencies in developing an accessible system. As part of the web based management information system, a publicly available website will be used for informing families of the factors to consider as part of a high quality program. West Virginia demonstrates its commitment to providing information to families on quality child care programs, however the lack of technology to access the website leaves some families without the information. West Virginia did not demonstrate multiple options for family access to information.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs</b>	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)**

Continuous improvement is addressed through incentives to Early Learning and Development Programs including assistance with the cost of national accreditation, scholarships for the supply of highly qualified Early Childhood Educators, and increasing the percentage of Children with High Needs enrolled in the top tier of Early Learning and Development Programs. West Virginia stated its performance measures have been set for participation in the TQRIS based on prior experience and national rates. However, an increase of 1% or 19 homes is not an ambitious target for the state, nor is 5% which represents 18 centers. This lack of participation reduced scoring in this area. There is no rationale or strategy identified for increasing the percentage of Children with High Needs enrollment which lowered this score. West Virginia provides grant funds for incentives to child care providers for assistance in moving up the tiers as well as a program to help providers underwrite fees for national accreditation. West Virginia did not provide sufficient information on why incentives would be spent on national accreditation since there is not sufficient data to support improved child outcomes. West Virginia may wish to consider use of the funds for other incentives because the state only identified a few incentives for the program and teacher level and no incentives at the family level. Currently, West Virginia funds two scholarship programs to support scholarships for early childhood educators. West Virginia demonstrated its commitment to high numbers of qualified staff through additional funding to its state commitment. West Virginia did not provide specific strategies or information on how it would address Children with High Needs other than a statement that they strive to provide more Children with High Needs better access.

	Available	Score
<b>(B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.</b>	15	10



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 third party evaluation will be selected via the RFP process to evaluate the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness that includes a set of measureable outcomes impacting school readiness, improved health and fitness, less aggressive behavior, and improved social and emotional skills. West Virginia did demonstrate its commitment to determining whether tiers in the TQRIS have any impact on improved child outcomes through its approach to evaluation. However the state has left this area open to interpretation by a vendor because it has not clearly defined what it wants in this area. West Virginia stated it will identify specific measures for Children with High Needs in the information management system including longitudinal measures to track outcomes as children transition into later elementary grades. West Virginia stated it will award competitive priority during the proposal review process based on the quality of the evaluator's plan to address research outcomes for Children with High Needs. West Virginia stated the need to add specific measures into the RFP for the evaluation of school progress and child outcomes. This is one strategy to address child outcomes, especially for Children with High Needs but the state did not define its Children with High Needs and that should not be left up to the evaluator. The reader does not see coordination among the agencies in implementing the RFP for evaluation. The state Pre-K has data on results of its program but it does not appear to be part of designing this evaluation for the TQRIS. West Virginia does not demonstrate a coordinated approach to validating the effectiveness of the TQRIS.

**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
<b>(C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.</b>	30	18

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

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

**Comments on (C)(1)**

The Early Learning and Development Standards cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness across the infant, toddler, and preschool years in developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate fashion. Supports are in place to promote understanding and commitment to the Standards and Programs and seem appropriate in reaching staff. West Virginia will design user friendly documents for the full set of Early Learning Standards, develop modules, and disseminate to all administrators. The modules will be developed and disseminated for all Essential Domains of School Readiness for high quality professional development. West Virginia's past experience in the implementation of its readiness program provides a successful foundation on which to replicate. Development of modules, refinement of the Comprehensive Assessment System at the infant and toddler level, incorporation into the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, integration with existing initiatives, such as the Early Childhood Positive Behavior Support are the activities and strategies identified. West Virginia's strategies have been successful for its existing initiatives so integrating this new information is an appropriate avenue for use. West Virginia demonstrates that it will provide ongoing professional development to support the Program Standards, Comprehensive Assessment System, Competency Framework to promote understanding. West Virginia will develop and implement the Infant and Toddler Professional development system and Comprehensive Assessment System in conjunction with the ECAC. West Virginia will pilot the system with at least three resource and referral agencies to receive feedback for continuous improvement prior to statewide implementation. West Virginia demonstrates an appropriate strategy to operate a pilot prior to statewide implementation. West Virginia did not identify any funding support for the local programs operating the pilot phase for the state. West Virginia will review the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework to include infant/toddler and Pre-K Early Learning and Development Standards. The professional development for implementation will be coordinated with D1 which is an appropriate way to coordinate this activity.

	Available	Score
<b>(C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>18</b>

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 State has outlined a High Quality Plan to address health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness. As part of this plan, the State will revise existing Program Standards to address developmental and behavioral screenings and follow up; promotion of physical, social, and emotional development; and health literacy. In this approach, West Virginia demonstrates that it will address all of the required components. Currently, West Virginia has partial implementation of this plan. Through the expansion of the Coordinated School-Public Health Partnership (CSHSP) professional development will be provided to integrate health standards into existing early childhood programs and expand the model with an early childhood focus. West Virginia demonstrates an appropriate approach to coordinate the health standards with an existing partnership. Physical activity is supported through an application process to increase playgrounds and playground equipment for children ages birth to five. West Virginia demonstrated that physical activity is available in the community and not just at the school which is an appropriate approach to include families. West Virginia did not demonstrate that the physical activity is accessible for children with disabilities. Children with High Needs may need some adaptive playground equipment but that was not mentioned. West Virginia did not specify Children with High Needs inclusion in the neighborhood physical activity and could have by listing adaptive equipment or

universal access requirements. Leveraging funds to expand the Governor's Kids First Kit for Children with High Needs as part of the screening, referral, follow-up care, and ongoing health care is identified and appropriate to meet the annual targets. West Virginia stated its specific expansion of the Governor's Kids First Kit to address Children with High Needs which is an appropriate avenue. Participating in a Governor's Campaign is always a high impact strategy. However, the lack of definition of Children with High Needs impacts the scoring. West Virginia does not have any data on the Birth to 3 in its performance measure for health care follow up. The targets are not overly ambitious but without baseline data for follow up or ongoing health care, it is difficult to set percentage increases.

**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
<b>(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.</b>	40	24

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)**

Currently the state does not have a common framework so there is minimal implementation on this plan. The State High Quality Plan revises and implements a common Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework through rebranding of the revision as part of The Ready Set Go! Framework which has statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned to it. West Virginia demonstrated that it integrated the Framework into an existing program that has identified professional development opportunities so this can be implemented efficiently. The Ready Set GO! Framework has been successful, thus using this as the foundation is an appropriate strategy for implementation. An integration of the revised core knowledge and competencies into the technical assistance structures across early childhood programs will increase the availability of support. The State will finalize infant/toddler credentials and expand and revise the current career ladder into a career lattice that identifies the path for obtaining a credential within the early childhood system. There will be a dedicated position known as the career advising coordinator, located within the WV Higher Education Policy Commission during the grant period. The responsibility of the coordinator is to facilitate review and revision of the Core Knowledge and Competencies. While West Virginia is employing a person to work within the higher education community, it is not clear how this will demonstrate a strategic approach and participation from within the higher education community. From the lack of data provided by the post secondary institutions and adding one staff member to address this Framework, West Virginia does not demonstrate commitment on the part of the higher education community to the common Framework. The Technical Assistance Center for Social Emotional Intervention (TACSEI) provides support to include expectations for core competencies for Children with High Need as part of the Framework. West Virginia identified an appropriate avenue to integrate the expectations into the core competencies and engage post secondary institutions.

**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
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**(E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry.**

40

30

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 State has a High-Quality Plan to implement independently a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades, especially for Children with High Needs. West Virginia demonstrated that the assessment includes the Essential Domains of School Readiness. Currently, WV has a Pre-K Child Assessment System that has provided data on child outcomes. The WV Kindergarten Child Assessment System (K-CAS) will align directly to the WV Pre-K Child Assessment system, which is integrated statewide in all WV Pre-K Programs, stand-alone 3 year old Head Start Programs, and home based Head Start programs. West Virginia stated that the Kindergarten Child Assessment System will not prevent children from entering kindergarten. West Virginia demonstrated an appropriate approach by building on successful state infrastructure. Technical services and field studies for reliability and validity will be conducted. Professional development will be provided and data collection will occur through an online system managed by the Office of Information Systems for dissemination and publication of annual data. West Virginia demonstrated that it included all of the Essential Domains of School Readiness. (A)(1)-12 identifies the current status of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment and WV currently has all Essential Domains in its current program except for physical well being and motor development but will determine the tool for use. West Virginia acknowledges the lack of one program element and will address this as part of the assessment system. West Virginia did not demonstrate how a significant portion of state and federal resources other than these grant funds are used to develop the system. The early learning data system is being built by another state agency and governor's office but West Virginia did not demonstrate the coordination or necessity for two systems.

	Available	Score
<b>Total Points Available for Selection Criteria</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>189</b>

**Priorities**

Competitive Preference Priorities

Priorities

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

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)**

West Virginia earned at least 70 percent of the maximum points for this criterion. West Virginia has included all the elements required for the Kindergarten Entry Assessment within section (E)(1) while still incorporating the current Kindergarten Early Learning Scale as part of the WV Kindergarten Child Assessment System (K-CAS).

**Absolute Priority**

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

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**

West Virginia's application coherently addressed how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Program for Children with High Needs so they enter kindergarten ready to succeed. West Virginia provided a commitment to Early Learning and Development by continuing its fiscal commitment during lean economic times. West Virginia has a sufficient foundation and infrastructure currently in place to meet the goals listed in the grant. The applicant's thoughtful responses by providing background information, areas to address, followed by the rationale for moving in the specific direction was an appropriate approach to the grant organization to highlight the High Quality Plan. The state is building upon an existing infrastructure that has committed fiscal resources over the last ten years, including from 2007 forward. The State has not decreased its commitment to Early Learning and Development Programs. The applicant identified Children with High Needs as the competitive priority for its evaluation of whether the system put in place will improve child outcomes. Although West Virginia made the statement of addressing Children with High Needs, the applicant did not define or develop this area throughout the grant. The commitment to Children with High Needs was not demonstrated throughout the grant with specific strategies for certain populations within the High Needs definition. Additionally, West Virginia did not define particular areas as requiring additional supports in certain geographic regions of the state, certain assessment areas or certain professional development needs, resulting in an unclear picture of who are the Children with High Needs in the state. West Virginia provided data to support its Pre-K program achievements for children as they entered kindergarten and since it was building on a system that had success, the state demonstrated its ability to improve the quality of Early Learning and Development.