

From Birth to School Readiness: *The Massachusetts Early Learning Plan 2012-2015*



Grant Proposal:

Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge

October 17, 2011





The Honorable Arne Duncan
Secretary, U.S. Department of Education
550 12 Street, SW
Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-4260

October 17, 2011

Dear Secretary Duncan and Secretary Sebelius,

As the Commissioner of the Department Early Education and Care (EEC) in Massachusetts, under the astute and dedicated leadership of Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, I am excited to submit ***From Birth to School Readiness: Massachusetts Early Learning Plan, 2012-1015***. Massachusetts is poised to continue to build the nation's most effective system of high-quality comprehensive early learning and development.

The **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan** is ambitious yet achievable; it builds on the state's collaborative accomplishments and is a blueprint for the state to take its early learning and development efforts to the next level. Massachusetts is dedicated to increasing coordination in our system of early learning and development and aims to prepare children for school success, especially those with the highest needs. In fiscal year 2012, over 90% of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care budget were used to provide accessible and affordable child care to the state's low income families with children.

This application identifies opportunities for future systemic growth and provides an innovative and comprehensive plan for transforming early childhood systems statewide. A set of core strategies are foundational to our plans to take expansive steps toward creating a unified approach to improving child outcomes in Massachusetts, including:

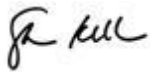
1. Ensuring **high program quality** by supporting continuous improvement of programs and educators through universal participation in the Massachusetts tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), including a validation of that system;
2. Continuing to support early learning and development **standards through validation and alignment**, as required by the tiered QRIS, and including the creation of English Language Learner development standards;
3. Creating the **Massachusetts Early Learning and Development Assessment System** (MELD), from birth to grade three, building off the tiered QRIS requirement for programmatic environmental assessments (Environment Rating Scales), adult-child interaction and child-focused screening and formative assessment; including expanding screening to children who are not in formal programs or may be involved in other state

agencies and measuring growth by developing a common measure for a Kindergarten Entry Assessment, that in its first year is slated to include 17,500 kindergarten students (26% of statewide enrollment) and an estimated 874 kindergarten teachers (29% of kindergarten teachers statewide);

4. **Linking our statewide network of family engagement and community supports to evidence-based practices** for literacy and universal child screening while expanding the availability of culturally and linguistically appropriate resources to families;
5. Ensuring early educators' **competency through workforce knowledge, skills and practice-based supports** through education, training, and **incentives** to promote effective practice and increase retention; including a focus on creating access to the system for educators whose home language is not English;
6. **Enhancing data systems** to better inform program practice and state decision-making through the Early Childhood Information System (ECIS); and
7. Linking and creating greater **alignment, from birth to third grade, for schools and communities to promote healthy child development** and sustain program effects through a strategy for communities, educators and families.

Lastly, I would like to express my appreciation for this historical opportunity to build on our work in supporting young children and their families through this comprehensive system-building effort. Massachusetts is well-positioned to realize the goals of Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge, and strives to make continuous improvements to advance early learning and development outcomes for our youngest citizens.

Sincerely,



Sherri Killins, Ed.D

Commissioner

Dept. of Early Education and Care

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPLICATION ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS.....	
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.....	
SECTION V	1
GLOSSARY.....	4
SECTION A.....	7
A(1).....	7
A(2).....	50
A(3).....	69
A(4).....	85
SECTION B.....	93
B(1).....	96
B(2).....	109
B(3).....	116
B(4).....	119
B(5).....	126
SECTION C.....	132
C(1).....	132
C(2).....	145
C(4).....	158
SECTION D.....	171
D(2).....	171
SECTION E.....	186
E(1).....	186
E(2).....	196
PRIORITY 2.....	205
PRIORITY 3.....	209
PRIORITY 4.....	210
PRIORITY 5.....	219
BUDGET.....	223
BUDGET PART I – TABLES.....	223
BUDGET PART II – NARRATIVE.....	225
APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	232
LIST OF LETTERS OF SUPPORT.....	234

SECTION V - CROSS-REFERENCE TABLE

Participating State Agency Name (* for Lead Agency)	MOU Location in Application	Funds/Program(s) administered by the Participating State Agency
*Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)	N/A	\$45 million: 9 Project Categories: 1) Tiered QRIS Validation, Universal Participation and Quality Improvement; 2) Standards Validation and Alignment; 3) Measuring Growth Through the MELD from Birth to Grade Three; 4) Universal Engagement of Families and the Public Using Evidence-Based Practice; 5) Ensuring Competency through Workforce Knowledge, Skills and Practice-Based Support; 6) Measuring Growth by Developing a Common Measure for Kindergarten Entry Assessment; 7) Implementing the ECIS; 8) Sustaining Program Effects in the Early Elementary Grades; and 9) Pre-K to Grade Three Alignment for Educational Success.
Department of Public Health (DPH)	Appendix FF	\$2.5 million: This will support the hiring of one EEC Clinical Health and one Mental Health Specialist to embed health guidance for families with high-needs children in multiple programmatic systems via staff training, training on medication administration, data sharing and aligning programmatic and staff resources that can benefit young, high needs children.
Department of Children and Families (DCF)	Appendix HH	\$600,000: To educate DCF staff about the availability of early childhood education programs to families receiving DCF services, such as domestic violence shelters.
Department of Mental Health (DMH)	Appendix GG	\$1.6 million: To work with EEC to hire one full-time specialist in early childhood mental health, and one-part-time child psychiatrist. The agencies will collaborate on the <i>Statewide Community Crisis Intervention Project</i> , the <i>Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Project</i> , and establishing links between EEC's CFCE

		grantees and DMH's <i>Parent Support Groups</i> for parents of children with mental illness.
Office for Refuge and Immigrants (OIR)	Appendix KK	\$345,000: to hire an Early Education and Care Liaison and execute plans to increase two-way communication between the early education and care community and programs serving immigrant and refugee families.
Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)	Appendix II	\$200,000: Collaborate on efforts to provide services to homeless families.
Executive Office of Education	Appendix Z	Non-funded: Cabinet-level education office that oversee public education system in Mass.; will collaborate on pre-K to 12 standards, KEA, Readiness Centers, state data systems etc.
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education	Appendix AA	Non-funded: Will collaborate on birth-grade 3 framework, wrap-around zones, P-20 data system etc.
Department of Higher Education	Appendix BB	Non-funded: Will collaborate on workforce development initiatives, including articulation and transfer, Early Childhood Educators Scholarship Program; PQ Registry; and the development of courses in early childhood education.
Department of Transitional Assistance	Appendix JJ	Non-funded: Will collaborate with EEC to support access to early education and care for DTA-involved families; provide cross-training professional development opportunities and share data.
State Advisory Council	Appendix CC	Non-funded: EEC serves as the SAC; will carry out efforts to improve program quality, conduct needs assessment, prepare an effective workforce; and establish the ECIS.

MA Head Start State Collaboration Office	Appendix DD	Non-funded: A formal component of EEC; will work to ensure successful transitions from Head Start to public schools; provide professional development; support diverse families with comprehensive services.
Children's Trust Fund	Appendix EE	Non-funded: Will collaborate on oversight and implementation of MIECHV; provide linkages for families to EEC-funded early education and care; partner with EEC to integrate Strengthening Families model; and expand joint professional development.

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

☒ Yes

☐ No

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

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

☒ Yes

☐ No

GLOSSARY – Massachusetts Early Learning Reform Plan

An Act Relative to Early Education and Care: This is the state’s seminal early education law, passed in 2008. The law formally establishes the development of a coordinated system of early education and care in Massachusetts, greatly enhancing EEC’s original enabling statute. It created the Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) Program; created a state advisory council; and delineated powers and duties of the EEC Board, Department, and Commissioner.

Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet: Created in 2008, this is a state leadership team focused on streamlining state efforts to improve services for children, youth and families. It includes the secretaries of education, health and human services, administration and finance, housing and economic development, labor and workforce development, public safety and the child advocate. The Readiness Cabinet serves as the primary forum for high-level inter-agency communication and problem-solving around multi-dimensional issues facing the state’s children and families.

Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE): These 107 statewide grants serve as the prime funding vehicle through which the state (through the EEC) supports family and community engagement activities and access to quality early education and care opportunities including childcare and community resources.

Core Competencies: The eight core competency areas and subcategories reflect the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for all educators, youth workers, and administrators working in the early education and care and out-of-school time field. Professional development opportunities sponsored by EEC align with core competency areas. (Also referred to as the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework: WKCF).

Department of Early Education and Care (EEC): Created in through the 2005 budget process, Massachusetts became the first state in the nation to create one agency to oversee early education and care and after-school services for families by consolidating the former Office of Childcare Services with the Early Learning Services Unit of the Department of Education.

Early Childhood Information System (ECIS): The state is developing a birth-kindergarten cross-agency (horizontal leg) data system that will flow into the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), a vertical data tracking system that provides unique student identifying numbers to track children’s growth and development over time.

EEC Board: This 11-member board is responsible for implementing *An Act Establishing Early Education for All*. It also serves as the *State Advisory Council (SAC)*. Membership includes: the Secretaries of the HHS and Education, a member of the business community, an early education and care teacher, a parent/guardian of a child receiving early education and care services, a provider of early education and care, a person with expertise in evaluation and assessment of pre-school programs, and a pediatrician or nationally recognized expert in educational psychology.

Early Education for All Campaign (EEA): The campaign, launched in 2000 by Strategies for Children, is largely credited for the passage of *An Act Relative to Early Education and Care*. The campaign brought together a broad-based coalition of leaders from business, early childhood, labor, religion, health care, education and philanthropy, allied with parents, grassroots leaders and policymakers on behalf of children and families.

Educator Provider Support (EPS): The EPS grants are awarded to six professional development partnerships located in EEC regions across the Commonwealth. Each regional partnership consists of several member organizations (consortia of public and private) with one lead, organizing agency. These existing six EPS grantees (regional partnerships) serve as EEC's prime vehicle for the state's early learning professional development.

Executive Office of Education (EOE): The state established in law on March 10, 2008 a single Secretariat to oversee the state's three education agencies in one unified governance structure (the Departments of Early Education and Care (EEC), Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), Higher Education and the University of Massachusetts system).

Formative Assessments: The state's three approved formative assessment tools are Work Sampling System, Teaching Strategies-GOLD, and High Scope COR.

Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs): Public and private colleges and universities in Massachusetts.

Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers: The state's infant/toddler standards are geared to all types of early education and care settings that care for children from birth-age three. They describe what programs and educators should focus on to support the healthy development of infants and toddlers, and facilitate their use for professional development.

Massachusetts Early Learning Plan: This is the name of the state's overarching high quality plan proposed in this grant application.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): The largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas.

Pre-K Common Core Standards: Also known as the **Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks**, the state adopted the national recognized Common Core Standards but took the bold step to include the state's pre-K guidelines to create a system of aligned standards.

Professional Quality (PQ) Registry: The PQ Registry is an EEC online application that gathers important information on the size, composition, education, and experience of current workforce.

Readiness Centers: Created by the EOE in 2009, the state designed six regional Readiness Centers around the state to serve as professional development hubs that link birth to 5, K-12 and out-of-school-time programs, and higher education to address both local/regional needs and statewide priorities regarding teacher quality and the use of data. The Readiness Centers are operated by regional consortia of partners, which include public and private institutions of higher education, school districts, early education and out-of-school-time providers, educational collaboratives, non-profit organizations, business, and community.

Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (Tiered QRIS): The state launched its quality rating and improvement system in 2011, beginning with a pilot program in 2010. We currently offer four ratings levels and provide real-time feedback to professionals in early education and care and out-of-school time settings on a path towards quality.

Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Program Manager: The QRIS Program Manager is an EEC online application, which helps early education and care programs manage the QRIS Application process.

Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (Tiered QRIS) Standards: There are three sets of standards, which describe key indicators of quality for Center-based/School-based programs, Family Child Care and After School/Out of School Time programs.

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS): The pre-eminent international assessment that provides reliable and timely data on the mathematics and science achievement of U.S. 4th- and 8th-grade students compared to that of students in other countries.

State Early Childhood Advisory Council (SAC): The Massachusetts EEC Board functions also as the SAC, fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders in the community toward the creation of a high-quality universal birth to 5 programs that focused on kindergarten readiness.

Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SDIS): Our state's SLDS is a vertical database that tracks longitudinal student data over time.

Wraparound Zone Initiative: The Initiative develops district and school services and systems to strategically address students' physical, social, and emotional health needs to promote academic success. The Initiative focuses on building district capacity to support schools' efforts to meet the non-academic needs of students; and improving collaboration between district, school administrators, teachers and community-based partners in order to foster positive school climates and effective academic instruction.

A. Successful State Systems

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

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

(a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;

(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;

(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and

(d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.

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

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is widely recognized as a national leader in innovative school reform. For the past two decades, sustained investments in children's growth and development combined with a strong commitment to high standards and rigorous, transparent assessment and accountability have driven learning outcomes that outpace all other states. Our students have led the nation on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Reading and Mathematics exams in the fourth and eighth grades since 2005.¹ On the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Massachusetts fourth graders ranked second worldwide in science achievement and tied for third in mathematics.²

As the state has aggressively worked toward school improvement, however, it has reached an inevitable, and albeit obvious, conclusion: learning is not limited to what occurs within the

1 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (January, 25 2011). Massachusetts 4th and 8th graders show strong promise on 2009 NAEP science exams.

2 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (December 9, 2008). TIMSS results place Massachusetts among world leaders in math and science.

schoolhouse doors and external factors have a significant impact on students' *readiness* to learn. In the recent Op-Ed in *Education Week*³, Massachusetts Secretary of Education Paul Reville and Columbia University professor Jeff Henig observed that nutrition, health care, safe learning spaces, enrichment, and myriad other influences affect children's learning outcomes. And, it is those children who find the least support in their home, peer, and community experiences that often face the most severe challenges in school. This point has been made evident in Massachusetts, which despite impressive national results, continues to struggle with one of the largest achievement gaps in the nation. On the 2011 third grade Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) reading exam, for example, only 61% of students achieved proficiency with results far lower in major urban centers like Boston, Springfield, and Worcester (between 36% and 40%).⁴

Compelling evidence shows that one effective solution for strengthening the broader range of children's educational experiences is through high-quality early learning and development programs. The reasons are two-fold. First, these programs address perhaps the most important period in children's lives. As noted by Dr. Jack Shonkoff at the Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child, a source of counsel to state educational leaders in Massachusetts, there is a critical link between children's experiences in their first five years of life and eventual success in school. Early adversity in the form of "toxic stress" greatly impedes the brain from developing the necessary circuitry to fully engage in learning. Second, there are a number of early learning models with strong evidence for improving children's outcomes, especially among high needs children. Evidence drawn from model pre-kindergarten programs, for example, has demonstrated significantly improved school and life outcomes among program participants (e.g. less likely to be placed in special education, more likely to graduate from high school, more likely to attend college).⁵

3 Reville, P. & Henig, J. (2011, May 25) Why Attention Will Return to Nonschool Factors, *Education Week*, .

4 National Association of Education Progress assessments (2009); Strategies for Children. (2010). Momentum grows: Third grade reading proficiency in Massachusetts.

5 Harvard University Center for the Developing Child. (n.d.). *Brain hero* [web video]. Retrieved from http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/resources/multimedia/videos/brain_hero/

In Massachusetts, state leaders, local educators, and the public have responded to this evidence. Children's early learning and development has come to be viewed as the unfinished business of education reform—an overlooked prerequisite for entry into a unified birth to 20 educational system. The state estimates that as many as 135,000 children from birth to age five face one or more risk factors each day that could lead to toxic stress, with as many as 20,000 (15%) facing three or more risk factors that without intervention are likely to lead to developmental delays.⁶ While recognition of the importance of confronting risk factors in children's earliest years had long been present in Massachusetts policymaking, isolated reforms did not produce a successful system based on an effective governance structures and clearly articulated goals delivered through a coordinated set of programs, policies, and services to effectively prepare young children for school success. The state had no vehicle to build on and leverage its natural assets: universal health coverage and nationally-renowned health care providers, cutting-edge research institutes in child development at world class universities, a thriving non-profit and philanthropic sector, and a strong base of high-quality early education and care programs (Massachusetts has more center-based programs accredited by the National Center for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) than any other state in the nation).⁷

So in 2005, Massachusetts took the bold step of becoming the first state in the nation to create one agency to oversee early education and care and after-school services for families, the independent Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) (See: (A)(3)).

In the remainder of this grant application, we will detail in full the work of EEC, the state's designated lead agency on this proposal, and more importantly, present the next stage of continuing to build capacity in a strategic children's early learning and development agenda. Our goal is to ensure all children enter school ready to succeed and to eliminate school readiness gaps between high needs children and their more advantaged peers. Through strategic planning, grounded in research, and an expansive, inclusive, statewide information-gathering process, the

⁶ National Center for Children in Poverty. Young Child Risk Calculator. Retrieved from <http://www.nccp.org/tools/risk/>.

⁷ NAEYC. Retrieved from http://oldweb.naeyc.org/academy/summary/center_summary.asp

state is taking charge to use what we know—and building on what we have done—to take the next leap forward in building a truly high-quality, birth-20 system.

Timeline of Milestones for Early Learning Reform in Massachusetts

Massachusetts Education Reform Act	Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) established	Executive Office of Education creates a unified governance model for three education agencies	Mass. passes <i>An Act Relative to Early Education and Care</i>	EEC launches new licensing regulations, which include measures of quality	EEC implements QRIS and the Professional Qualifications Registry
1993	2005		2008	2010	2011

(a)

We believe it is our educational and moral responsibility to get it right for children in their earliest years. The urgency of this responsibility motivated the state and EEC to embrace an ambitious agenda over the last six years to invest in high-quality programs and services for all children, especially those with high needs. Still, Massachusetts was hardly immune from the worst recession to hit the U.S. since the Great Depression, which resulted in a \$3.1 billion budget deficit in fiscal year 2010 (FY10).⁸ Despite the budgetary abyss and shrinking resources in the face of growing need, Governor Patrick and the Massachusetts Legislature remained strongly committed to an educational system seen as ever more essential to the state's economic recovery and long-term prosperity. At a time of catastrophic budget cuts, educational agencies including EEC fared well and even saw investments in some programs increase.

The state's commitment to early education, in the face of recent budget crisis, is nothing new. The state created EEC in 2005 in the midst of a \$3 billion budget deficit.⁹ It was in part as a strategic response to the crisis that the state made the decision to focus on integrating and aligning resources and policies across all state agencies serving children, and undertook specific reforms targeted to children with high needs. At that time, in FY06, the total agency budget was

⁸ Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center. (2009). Fiscal year 2010 budget preview. Retrieved from http://www.massbudget.org/file_storage/documents/Fiscal_Year_2010_Budget_Preview_January_22.pdf

⁹ Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy & Strategies for Children. (2008). A case study of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. (pp. 22).

nearly \$500,000,000 with approximately 85% of that funding from federal appropriations or state match for federal appropriations. To this day, the EEC's funding comes from a total of 17 state, federal, and other trust accounts. EEC's strong centralized management, however, has resulted in increased efficiencies, greater economies of scale, and enhanced program quality in ways that would not have been possible under former governance structures.

Between 2009 and 2011, EEC re-bid all major funding streams for early education and care under its control. This action provided an opportunity to position services closer to high needs communities and to expand services to high needs populations, such as a boost in subsidies for homeless children from 85 slots in four regions to over 600 in all six regions. It also allowed EEC to build and strengthen regional networks, add new requirements to raise the level of quality such as accreditation and/or tiered QRIS participation, focus on workforce core competencies as defined by the state, and focus and direct community and family engagement efforts in line with principles adopted by several state agencies.

Massachusetts Population At a Glance

The 2010 Census reported Massachusetts population to be 6.5 million. Children from birth to age 5 accounted for only seven percent (442,592) of this total. A significant proportion, however, may be categorized as high need. Close to one-third of all children birth to 5 are low-income, according to the National Center for Children in Poverty, while 17.4% are English language learners, 6.7% have special needs, and .9% homeless (see tables (A)(1)-1 and (A)(1)-2).¹⁰ These children are most at-risk of encountering developmental delays and school readiness gaps and most likely to benefit of high-quality early learning and development experiences.

Since its creation in 2005, approximately over 90% of EEC's budget has provided direct aid to the state's low-income children from birth to age 13. Remaining EEC funds are committed to enhancing program quality, supporting the training and professional development of the early education and care workforce, and family and community engagement strategies, which support

¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010, Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Department of Public Health.

the entire system while still focusing on high needs populations first and foremost (see section (A)(4)).

Table (A)(1)-4 presents data on statewide spending by investment type from FY07 to FY11.

In FY07, the state spent more than \$554 million on young children's early learning and development. In FY08, we spent \$589 million before the economic recession has its impact on the state budget. Even during these times of fiscal strain, however, Gov. Patrick's FY12 budget, which included \$570 million in overall budget reductions, prioritized and protected investments in high quality early education. In FY12, EEC was funded at \$543 million, a difficult 10% reduction a demonstration of his continued commitment to early education.¹¹ Through effective budgeting, close monitoring of caseload, and the re-bidding contracts with early education and care providers to mandate quality improvements (such as tiered QRIS participation; see: Section (B)), EEC was able to absorb a significant part of the reduction and integrate and align resources across state agencies while increasing quality.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), an unprecedented investment in the American economy, also benefitted Massachusetts early learning and development programs significantly. Notably, the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), provided the state with \$23.97 million; Head Start and Early Head Start provided the state with an additional \$10.1 million; and funding through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), was \$10.2 million. This infusion of much-needed federal dollars helped us advance significantly our Strategic Action Plan (See: (A)(3)) by taking our delivery of high quality programs to the next level. Specifically, the state used ARRA funds to develop and implement our infant toddler guidelines; provide access to school age and pre-school children to summer programs such as the KEEP Program to prevent a learning gap for children educationally at risk; provide wrap-around services for Head Start children whose parents met CCDBG eligibility (See: Appendix A); and supported partnerships between early education and care and K-3 system to align and provide professional development regarding early literacy, focusing on family child care providers and infant and toddler facilities,

¹¹ The 187th General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (2010). Massachusetts budget FY10. Retrieved from www.malegislature.gov/budget.

among other major accomplishment (See: (A)(3)). This experience demonstrated EEC's capacity to effectively manage a large federal grant by investing in sustainable activities that advance system quality.

(b) For Massachusetts, “High Needs Children” include those with sufficiently low household incomes, those in need of special education assistance, and other priority populations who qualify for federal and/or state aid. Under this definition, from FY07 and FY11 we increased opportunities for high needs children to access early learning development programs through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and CCDF funds, increasing the numbers of available slots from 53,787 to 75,483; the number of children in Head Start/Early Head Start increased from 12,495 to 16,540; and the number of children served by Title I funds increased from 10,076 in FY07 to 10,710. (See: Table (A)(1)-5).

But, in addition, the state is moving aggressively toward a much more specific definition for high needs children—one that includes children who have multiple risk factors linked to poor school and life outcomes such as: children and parents with special needs, children whose home language is not English, families and children involved in multiple state agencies, English language learners, children with parents who are deployed and are not living on a military base, recent immigrants, low-income households, parents with less than a high school education, children who are homeless or move more than once a year, and children in racial and ethnic communities that experience social exclusion.

Using these definitions, the state, through the Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) 2010 Statewide Needs Assessment, has identified 17 high-need communities¹² where large numbers of children younger than age 5 exceed the statewide average indicators including teen birth, infant mortality, crime, and poverty. For example, in Lawrence, a large urban community north of Boston, only 32.5% of preschool-aged children are enrolled in an early education program; 77% of public school students' first language is not English; and 87% are classified as low-income. Perhaps not surprisingly only 36% of third graders in Lawrence scored

¹² Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Fitchburg, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, North Adams, Pittsfield, Revere, Springfield, Southbridge, and Worcester.

proficient on the 2011 Third Grade MCAS reading exam. Across the Commonwealth, from Boston where 74% of K-12 children are considered low-income and only 37% of the city's students are proficient in reading by third grade to Brockton on the South Shore, where the premature birth rate is 12.4%, to Holyoke in the west with an infant mortality rate of 8.9%, high needs children and families face obstinate challenges.¹³

As the state has confronted the prevalence of high-needs children in certain localities and across the state, Massachusetts has gone beyond simply taking research on “toxic stress” and healthy child development; it has used a science-based framework to enact smart, forward-thinking legislation and create a high quality early learning development system. Our approach is predicated on meaningful engagement—of families, of communities, and of the public and non-profit organizations, both state and local. We have used research evidence of how effective policy that integrates pre-natal care, safe environments, stable relationships, institutional resources and a skilled and well-resourced workforce will improve the life chances of children.¹⁴ As a result, Massachusetts launched and strengthened programs such as a robust home-visiting program for high-need communities, embarked on building wrap-around services within communities, and directed funding to local family and community engagement programs to help communities best address their specific challenges related to family engagement (literacy, wait-list, language barriers etc.) (See: (C)(4)). The result has been a noticeable uptick in the number of high needs children in early education and care. The Commonwealth is on course to become a state with policies that truly reflect a “learning begins at birth” approach to closing the achievement gap.

(c)

EEC was created by consolidating the former Office of Childcare Services with the Early Learning Services Unit of the Department of Education. Over the six years since it was established, EEC has focused on building a strong, integrated infrastructure to support reform efforts to promote high-quality programs and services for all children and especially for high-

13 Infant Mortality = Infant deaths per 1,000 live births; Premature Birth = % before 37 weeks; Children's Trust Fund. (2010). MIECHV 2010 Statewide Needs Assessment, MIECHV HHS grant application,

14 Harvard University Center on the Developing Child. (2010). The foundations of lifelong health are built in early childhood. Retrieved from http://developingchild.harvard.edu/topics/foundations_of_lifelong_health/

needs children. Often working in collaboration with other government departments and with private institutions, EEC has promoted consistency in regulations and policies among agencies; began revamping its technology system; consolidated its waiting list for services; increased access to child care for families involved with the Department of Children and Families (foster care) and children of families who are homeless, as indicated above; and raised awareness of early education and care through a public-private partnership with United Way (See: (C)(4))¹⁵. This deliberate foundation-building has positioned us very well for the next stage of development.

Key state efforts and policies are:

An Act Relative to Early Education and Care passed the State Legislature unanimously in 2008. The law formally establishes the development of a coordinated system of early education and care in Massachusetts, greatly enhancing EEC's original enabling statute. The law created a state advisory council on early education to establish formal quality and performance standards to allow for continuous program improvement and further delineates powers and duties of the EEC Board, Department, and Commissioner. Its legacy is a streamlined system of accountability.

Executive Office of Education (EOE). In January 2008, in response to Governor Patrick's goal of creating a more seamless and coherent public education system, the state passed legislation to create the EOE. This cabinet-level entity oversees our three state education agencies (EEC, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), and the Department of Higher Education (DHE)). In keeping with the U.S. Department of Education's objective of creating a "cradle to college" pathway for education, this act made EEC a family's first point of entry into the state's education system.

Education Action Agenda. In 2008, the Governor released his Education Action Agenda, a 10-year vision for comprehensive, child-centered public education system to ensure that all children

15 Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy & Strategies for Children. (2008). A case study of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. (pp 28-29).

will succeed school, work, and life. Several of the Agenda’s recommendations, such as annual funding to achieve universal pre-kindergarten grants and the creation of a Birth to School-age Task Force, explicitly focus on early childhood education services.

An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap. This groundbreaking 2010 law enhanced the state’s ability to improve our education system in many ways, including: recognition that the state’s “turnaround” or lowest-performing schools include pre-K, full-day kindergarten, and literacy interventions to improve child outcomes; creating more powerful intervention tools to address persistent under-performance in schools; promoting the establishment of in-district public schools that can operate with increased autonomy and flexibility; allowing a highly-targeted increase in the charter school cap; and enabling programs with demonstrated records of success to serve students with highest levels of need.

(d)

This section summarizes major accomplishments related to the seven overarching areas cited for item (d). Our model is based on vertical (with different levels of the public education system) and horizontal (across sectors including health and human services) alignment to build an effective system of healthy growth and development from birth-20. (See more in (A)(3)). See Tables (A)(1)-6 through (A)(1)-10 for data currently available on program quality across our state’s early learning and development programs, including standards (A)(1)-6; our Comprehensive Assessment System in (A)(1)-7; health promotion practices in (A)(1)-8; family engagement in (A)(1)-9; workforce credentials in (A)(1)-10; and the status of the standards currently used in the state tiered QRIS in (B)(1)-1.

1) Early Learning Development Standards

Massachusetts’ has developed and implemented early learning and development standards used statewide for infants and toddlers and preschool. The ***Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers*** are shaped by the groundbreaking publication *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*.¹⁶ The guidelines communicate

16 National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. J.P. Shonkoff

the interrelated nature of the domains of development, describing how programs and educators can best support and interact with infants and toddlers and creating a continuum of learning that links early education and care to later success. In 2003, the state put in place the ***Guidelines for Preschool Early Learning Experiences***, which covered all recognized domains of development at the time (See: (C)(1)). And in 2010, through an agreement between EEC and ESE, the state adopted the Common Core Standards for pre-kindergarten, one of only a few states to take this bold step. The state merged the Common Core with its own standards and in 2011 released the ***Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Pre-K to further define and complement the already existing preschool guidelines***. This important decision, representing our commitment not only to early education but the importance of aligning the pre-K and K-12 sectors, has been key to creating a continuum of standards-based learning and to the state's goal of creating a truly seamless birth to 20 system.

2) Comprehensive Assessment Systems

Key to the implementation of standards is the ability to measure the growth in children. Early education and care programs are expected to be intentional and systemic in their interactions with children including developmental screenings and regular formative assessment. This requirement is included in licensing regulations that requires regular progress reports, and is stated clearly in the tiered QRIS as a requirement to use an evidenced-based tool to guide teaching and learning, as well as measure learning among individual children and groups (e.g. gender, language, age, ethnicity) to support program adjustments and inform professional development. EEC is also collaborating with ESE to develop the Massachusetts Early Learning and Development (MELD) assessment system, a system of screening and assessment for children from birth to third grade, including the Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA), that aligns seamlessly with the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) (see section (A)(2)). Key steps thus far:

Screening: EEC is currently scaling up use of screening tools with a plan to expand to target children who are not in formal programs. These children may be engaged with the Department of

Children and Families (DCF), Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), or engaged in local community programming. For screening children ages birth-5 we began in 15 communities using the Ages and Stage Questionnaire (ASQ) and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Social-Emotional (ASQ-SE) tools to support parent understanding of child growth and development and to determine developmental risk. Parents are asked to sign a parental consent so this data can be used to measure growth over time and linked to the child's longitudinal record. These screening tools are age and developmentally appropriate, valid, and reliable instruments that identify children who may need follow-up services to address developmental, learning, physical health, behavioral health, oral health, child development, vision and hearing. Screening is also required for formal child care programs at levels 2, 3, and 4 in the tiered QRIS.

Formative Assessment: The state currently requires one of three (*Work Sampling System*, *High Scope COR Teaching Strategies Gold*) formative assessments for state-funded quality grants for pre-schools, including Head Start. All programs participating in the tiered QRIS must also use evidenced-based formative assessments to guide and improve instructional practices and provide measures of children's growth. This requirement has been instrumental in helping the state focus on whole children development in the early years. EEC provides training and technical assistance in the effective use of formative assessment and the analysis of data to inform program practice, plan curriculum, individualize child learning, and communicate with parents.

Normative Assessment: EEC has been working with New York University (NYU) to train educators to administer norm referenced tools with regard to social and emotional development, literacy and numeracy. This opportunity has helped educators refine their own professional development plans. In (A)(2) and (C)(2) we discuss our expansion of this work, which includes using norm-referenced assessment tools to validate the three formative assessments in use.

3) Program Quality Improvement

Massachusetts has the highest total number (870) of early education and care programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in the

United States.¹⁷ As a forerunner to our tiered QRIS, in 2006 we implemented a voluntary, competitive **Universal Pre-kindergarten Grant Program (UPK)** with a \$4.6 million appropriation. In FY12, UPK was funded at \$7.5 million. UPK grantees must possess an EEC license or license-exemption; use an EEC-approved formative assessment tool for at least one year; follow state pre-school learning standards; serve (or be willing to serve) children from low-income or at-risk families; provide full-day, full-year services or access to services via an approved partnership agreement. Many of the requirements are included in our tiered QRIS.

In preparing for the development of the tiered QRIS, in FY11 the state **revised licensing regulations** to include many quality measures, including increasing the number of professional development hours, exercise, oral health (requiring tooth-brushing in program settings) and nutrition requirements, reading and medication training. The state also stated that at least one-third of required in-service professional development hours address “children who have special physical, emotional, behavioral, cognitive or linguistic needs or whose primary learning modality is visual, auditory, tactile or kinesthetic, who may require an adaptation in the environment, interaction or curriculum in order to succeed in their program.”

The state’s seminal achievement in 2011 was the launch of its **Tiered QRIS**, which began with a pilot program in fiscal year 2010 to ensure program accountability and metrics for high-quality teaching and learning. We currently offer four ratings levels and provide real-time guidance to professionals in early education and care and out-of-school time settings on a path towards quality. Our system recognizes that higher expectations must be matched with increased supports, financial incentives, professional development and technical assistance grounded in the science of child development. Today, approximately 2,500 or nearly one-quarter of the state’s 12,000 licensed programs participate in the tiered QRIS (See: Section (B)).

These structural changes have been supplemented with specific content-area investments in areas like **literacy** and **science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)**. In 2011 we awarded \$5,000 Child Care Quality Literacy Support Grants to 21 early education and out-of-school time

17 NAEYC. Accreditation. Retrieved from <http://www.naeyc.org/accreditation>.

programs to support curricular activities on language development and literacy (requiring tiered QRIS level 2 rating). EEC, in partnership with ESE, has held several intentional cross-sector workshops and trainings on early literacy both state wide and regionally. We have developed with UMASS Boston an online literacy course to support educators' understanding of literacy and oral language development from birth through third grade.

Critical to success in the Common Core are skills that are developed between birth and five. Children through play and early oral language development begin to obtain skills that are foundational for success in STEM and in gaining meaning from curriculum. These skills are used in both language arts and mathematics at differing degrees. The skills include interpretation, analyzing evaluation explanation description, organization, comparison and contrast, inquiring symbolization and representation. Intentional systemic exposure to opportunities to develop and use these skills in the context of peer and adult relationships provides a foundation for future growth. However, most early educators have not had an opportunity to build a systemic intentional practice around these ideas. STEM provides interesting content for application of the skills and creates curiosity in children that can later be fostered into interest.

This year's STEM conference will have a specific track on early education and is co-chaired by the Wheelock College President and the EEC Commissioner.

4) Health Promotion Practices (See more in (C)(4) and (A)(3).):

Given the state's first-in-the-nation status for having all residents, including children, covered by health insurance (98%), it's no surprise that the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and EEC work closely on children's health promotion. **The Massachusetts Children at Play Initiative** was developed by EEC, DPH, Head Start, and ESE's Child and Adult Food Program to respond to the growing trend of childhood obesity in the state (currently 21% of preschool children, according to DPH). During this year and next, 46 mentors trained in programs will visit 226 preschool programs twice in six months to support the programs in improving nutrition and physical activity policies. This effort supports implementation of the 2010 licensing regulations that included new requirements for nutrition, exercise and oral health.

Due to the importance of adult-child interactions, reports from early educators about difficulties in managing classroom behavior, and the science on the importance of social and emotional skills, EEC partnered with the ARRA-funded **Connected Beginning Training Institute** at Wheelock College, which trained approximately 1,800 early childhood educators to better prepare them for social-emotional development of children using the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning's (CSEFEL) Pyramid Model, which had been used successfully in Head Start. Through partnerships, EEC is also able to educate providers and families about other health issues, such as babies sleeping on their backs; and the state was recently selected by Prevent Blindness America to participate in a Maternal and Child Health Bureau grant to develop a **statewide strategy for vision screening** from age 3 through kindergarten entry.

5) **Family Engagement Strategies**

EEC recognized that core to our success is family and community engagement, as well as public will. Family and community engagement expectations are core standard categories for programs in each level of the tiered QRIS. The state also annually awards approximately \$14 million to 107 Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Programs (CFCE) grantees, locally based programs serving families with children birth to school age who may or may not be in formal early education and care programs. The grants provide critical information to families on child development; transition supports; assistance with connecting to comprehensive supports and outreach to isolated or hard to reach families.

DPH oversees 21 **home-visiting programs** serving 49,000 families across the state, many through a MIECHV federal grant. The largest serving programs are *Early Intervention* (serving 33,300 families/yr), *FOR Families* (3,200 families/year), and *Healthy Families Massachusetts* (3,100 families/yr) operated by The Children's Trust Fund, a non-profit organization with state board appointees. *Healthy Families* provides home-visiting for first-time parents under age 21 in five of the state's 17 highest need communities (soon to serve all 17; see: (A)(2)). Program success is evidenced by a 66% lower rate of child abuse by teen mothers and 83% of mothers enrolled in school or graduated from high school, compared to 53% nationally.

The state has Early Childhood Resource Centers located in the public libraries across the state; it is revamping its website to make it more family-friendly; and most recently, the receipt of a U.S. Dept. of Education Promise Neighborhood planning grant in three areas of Massachusetts—Worcester, Lawrence and the Dorchester area of Boston—includes efforts to bolster early literacy engagement with hard-to-reach families outside of community agencies. In addition, EEC, working with the United Way and the Bessie Tarrt Wilson Initiative for Children, held eight meetings across the state that included over 200 people to provide input on this grant application.

EEC contributed to the three Promise Neighborhoods by funding three \$5,000 **Promise Neighborhood Support Grants** that concentrate on “hard-to-reach” families. (See: Appendix B.) The one-time incentive grants will develop neighborhood partnership plans to increase families’ access to more equitable, multi-lingual and consistent information and services to support early literacy development.

In 2009, EEC set a strategic goal to launch a **communications campaign** to better inform families and the business community about not only early childhood and care resources, facilities, and options for their children, but also the science of early education and its link to school achievement. This campaign was launched in 2011 in partnership with United Way.

6) Development of Early Childhood Educators

Thanks in part to successful public-private partnerships and the state’s robust higher-education community, Massachusetts has worked vigorously to address the challenges to building and retaining a high-quality early education workforce. We are one of few states that have achieved a cross-sector, integrated professional development system.¹⁸ The primary vehicle for our progress has been our **Educator Provider Support (EPS) Grants**, which EEC rolled out in 2010 to fund the state’s new professional development system—a system based on alignment of professional development, tiered QRIS, and our Workforce Core Competencies. The goal of the new system

18 Howes, C., & Pianta, R. C. (Eds.). (2011). *Foundations for teaching excellence: Connecting early childhood quality rating, professional development, and competency systems in states*. Baltimore, Maryland: Brookes Publishing Co.

is to support pathways that lead educators to degree attainment, increased competency, accreditation and upward movement on tiered QRIS. EPS grants go to six regional partnerships that facilitate training of local early educators, with priority to staff in programs serving at least 50% of high needs children. (See: (D)(2)).

The state also instituted changes related to licensing, credentialing and tracking of professional qualification. In January 2010, we required educators who work with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, or school age children in EEC-licensed settings to register annually in the state's new **Professional Qualifications (PQ) Registry**). Currently 42,000 of the state's educators have created personal profiles on registry. Of the five early education workforce types of **credentials** in the state, 46% have EEC Certification as a Pre-School Teacher; 32% have EEC Certification as an Infant/Toddler Teacher; 25% have EEC Certification as a Preschool Lead Teacher; 10% have EEC Certification as an Infant/Toddler Lead Teacher; and 13% have EEC Director I Certification (See: Table A(1)-10 and -11). As mentioned above, we also revised our licensing standards in FY11 to move from basic health and safety standards to standards that focus on children's growth and development, including an online medication course (with assessment) for all licensed programs and an orientation course for all new programs. (See: Section (B)).

We've also taken significant steps to address problems associated with the degree attainment. Our **Higher Education Mapping Project** has resulted in the mapping the current network of two- and four-year public and select private institution of higher education (IHEs) in Massachusetts that offer a program of study in early childhood education, elementary education or in a related field that leads to a certificate, and/or an associate's or a bachelor's degree. The project includes a school profile for each school surveyed and a searchable database of required coursework. The second phase of the project compared early childhood degree and certificate required coursework at participating IHEs, with the intent to facilitate the transfer of credits by identifying common course themes across institutions and mapping courses to one or more of the state's Core Competencies.

The state also instituted an **Early Childhood Education Transfer Compact**, an agreement that facilitates the transfer of credit within the public higher education system for the early childhood education workforce. The goal is to not only reduce students' uncertainty about acceptance into

an early childhood education licensure programs and transfer of credits, but also to establish the goal for IHEs to apply the same requirements to transfer students as other students. To help with the cost of higher education, in 2006 the state legislature created an **Early Childhood Educators Scholarship Program**. The goal is to improve the quality and availability of teachers and care providers who work in infant/toddler, pre-school and school-age programs and enroll in an associate or bachelor degree program in early childhood education or related programs. The program currently provides more than 5,000 scholarships to early educators to pursue degrees.

The state also has sponsored several other learning opportunities based on the core competencies. Examples include: a Community Advocates for Young Learners (CAYL) Institute on leadership for elementary school principals and community-based providers; Wheelock College's Aspire Institute and Associated Early Education and Care trained 52 participants in advanced child assessment using nine coaches to support participants in implementing assessment practices; and a United Way, CAYL Institute and Wheelock College statewide initiative to advance the state's new tiered QRIS called *Together for Quality* (T4Q) funded by grants of \$500 to \$10,000 serving 400-600 programs. EEC also dedicates a staff position to workforce development for educators of children with diverse needs, and is a lead partner in *Special Quest*, a cross-agency initiative that focuses on the inclusion of **children with special needs and disabilities** throughout education settings. EEC is responsible for overseeing federal IDEA preschool special education funds for children ages 3-5, and working with public schools on special education services.

Finally, in 1998, the state created an "Invest in Children" license plate. Proceeds go to the Child Care Quality Fund, a division of EEC, which will spend at least \$449,750 in FY12. \$264,750 will support accreditation and Child Development Associate (CDA) fees (disbursed through the 6 EPS grantees); \$185,000 will fund child care quality grants of up to \$5,000 to early education and out-of-school time educators. Additionally, 21 grants were provided to non-profit programs to focus on early literacy development in the context of a whole child curriculum.

7) Kindergarten Entry Assessments

We recognize that the impacts of restructuring early education and care must be aligned with children's learning from kindergarten through grade two and family engagement, curriculum,

assessment and transitions. We also know that assessment at entry to kindergarten can provide a road map to individualized teaching and learning required to fully prepare children to succeed in public education. Massachusetts has received commitments from 22 school districts around the state to take part in the first cohort of our plan to develop a common kindergarten entry assessment (See: (E)(1)). The pending FY12 supplemental budget includes \$200,000 to further the design of the KEA.

8) Effective Data Practices (See: Table (A)(1)-13).

In 2011, EEC commissioned the design and implementation of Massachusetts Early Childhood Information System (ECIS), a horizontal, cross-agency data system that aligns and is interoperable with the vertical Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). Using ARRA funds we have been able to move this plan forward. Since the project began in February 2010, the state has assigned 30,069 new IDs and has identified 1,992 records with prior numbers. This effort has been aided by a state bond allocation, helping us gain traction that is pivotal for the creation of a birth-20 repository for children's educational information, gained with parental consent that starts with screening and flows into the SLDS in kindergarten.

Table (A)(1)-1: Children from Low-Income¹⁹ families, by age		
	Number of children from Low-Income families in the State	Children from Low-Income families as a percentage of all children in the State
Infants under age 1		
Toddlers ages 1 through 2	72,474 (includes infants through 2)	31%
Preschoolers ages 3 to kindergarten entry	62,229	27%
Total number of children, birth to kindergarten entry, from low-income families	134,703	29%
<i>Data source is the NCCP website. Data is from 2009. Low income information is not available for infants under 1 and toddlers ages 1 though 2 however data is provided for infants through 2.</i>		

¹⁹ Low-Income is defined as having an income of up to 200% of the Federal poverty rate.

Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs <i>The State should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations' unique needs. The State will describe such activities throughout its application.</i>		
Special populations: Children who . . .	Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...	Percentage of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...
Have disabilities or developmental delays²⁰ <i>DPH data from October 2010</i>	14,882 (part B) 15,162 from DPH Total: 30,044	442,592 (birth to 5 from 2010 Census) Waiting for Part C to do percentage 6.7%
Are English learners²¹	12,952 (only 3-5 year olds from DLL report 2010. Census doesn't count less than 3 as DLL)	17.4%
Reside on "Indian Lands"	NA	NA
Are migrant²²	114	0.0002%
Are homeless²³	3969	0.9%
Are in foster care (as of 12/31/2010) Source: FamilyNet DCF's MIS system	2376	.05%
Other as identified by the State Describe:		
<i>Homeless- Information was obtained from DHCD regarding the number of children in hotels and shelters. ESE was contacted and a number was obtained for public school preschool children who were identified as being doubled up, unaccompanied minor, unsheltered, or awaiting foster care. This number does not include children not involved with the public schools who are doubled up, unaccompanied, unsheltered or awaiting foster care.</i>		

²⁰ For purposes of this application, children with disabilities or developmental delays are defined as children birth through kindergarten entry that have an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

²¹ For purposes of this application, children who are English learners are children birth through kindergarten entry who have home languages other than English.

²² For purposes of this application, children who are migrant are children birth through kindergarten entry who meet the definition of "migratory child" in ESEA section 1309(2).

²³ The term "homeless children" has the meaning given the term "homeless children and youths" in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (425 U.S.C. 11434a(2)).

Table (A)(1)-3: Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, by age

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

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program, by age			
	Infants under age 1	Toddlers ages 1 through 2	Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry	Total
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Universal Preschool and 391 grants</i> <i>Data Source and Year: Data used for NIEER 2010</i>	NA	NA	14,221	14,221
Early Head Start and Head Start²⁴ <i>Data Source and Year: PIR 2010-2011, includes 222 children under the Head Start State Supplement.</i>	307	2266	13667	16540
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 <i>Data Source and Year: Part C DPH, 618 data, October 2010</i>	1882	13280	14,882	30044
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA <i>Data Source and Year:</i>			10710	10710

²⁴ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-3: Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, by age

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

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program, by age			
	Infants under age 1	Toddlers ages 1 through 2	Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry	Total
Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program Data Source and Year: data from CCIMS and ECCIMS data extract with placements on 8/1/201. Data includes IE contract (excluding ARRA funds), IE Vouchers (excluding teen parent funding), Supportive contracts and vouchers, Teen parent contracts, IE teen parent voucher, DTA teen parent voucher, DTA voucher (excluding teen parent), ARRA contract and ARRA voucher	1676	4301	27952	33929
Other Specify: Data Source and Year:				
Other Specify: Data Source and Year:				
<i>Massachusetts Part C continues to serve one of the highest percentages of children birth to three including infants and toddlers' at-risk receiving early intervention services. When compared to National Data Massachusetts has ranked number 1 among all states and territories for the last several years.</i>				

Table (A)(1)-4: Historical data on funding for Early Learning and Development

Type of investment	Funding for each of the Past 5 Fiscal Years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Supplemental State spending on Early Head Start and Head Start²⁵	\$8,500,000	\$9,000,000	\$9,000,000	\$8,000,000	\$7,499,998
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: UPK and 391</i>	\$4,631,237	\$6,886,933	\$10,859,239	\$7,819,562	\$7,424,449
State contributions to IDEA Part C	\$35.95M	\$40.24M	\$41.58M	\$27.55M	\$29.45M
State contributions for special education and related services for children with disabilities, ages 3 through kindergarten entry			\$10,337,279	\$9,019,276	\$9,019,276
Total State contributions to CCDF²⁶	\$78,008,135	\$77,541,603	\$76,819,599	\$77,383,570	\$77,052,705
State match to CCDF <i>Exceeded/Met/Not Met (if exceeded, indicate amount by which match was exceeded)</i>	\$33,034,762	\$32,568,230	\$31,846,226	\$32,410,197	\$32,079,332
TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs²⁷	\$335,545,734	\$364,396,678	\$325,786,672	\$287,318,789	\$295,506,047
Other State contributions <i>Specify: DPH part C- MassHealth</i>	\$21.65M	\$22.83M	\$26.98M	\$48.56M	\$47.58M
Other State contributions <i>Specify: DPH part C- Private Insurance</i>	\$36.80M	\$35.11M	\$34.52M	\$35.10M	\$40.20M
For 2007 and 2008 State contributions for special education and related services for children with disabilities, ages 3 through kindergarten entry, the 391 in FY07 and FY08 was blended in with a larger CPC grant, therefore, not able to definitively state what we paid for the inclusive classroom portion of the larger CPC grant in FY07 and FY08.					

²⁵ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

²⁶ Total State contributions to CCDF must include Maintenance of Effort (MOE), State Match, and any State contributions exceeding State MOE or Match.

²⁷ Include TANF transfers to CCDF as well as direct TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs.

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

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

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Total number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years ²⁸				
	2007	2008	2009 ²⁹	2010 ¹⁷	2011 ¹⁷
State-funded preschool (annual census count; e.g., October 1 count) <i>Specify: Universal Preschool and 391 grant. Year 2007 and 2008 include children in the now dissolved Community Partnership Program. Data comes from analysis used for NIEER Annual Yearbook</i>	17,882	19,257	10,797	14,221	NA
Early Head Start and Head Start³⁰ (funded enrollment)	12,495	12,575	12,705	13,174,	16,540
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 (annual December 1 count)	14,196 (Part B). 14,878 Part C Total: 29074	14,335 (Part B). 15,115 Part C Total: 29,450	14,754 (Part B). 14,902 Part C Total: 29,656	14,740 (Part B). 15,132 Part C Total: 29,872	14,882 (Part B). 15,162 Part C Total: 30,044
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA (total number of children who receive Title I services annually, as reported in the Consolidated State Performance Report)	8387	10076	10102	11369	10710
Programs receiving CCDF funds (average monthly served) Includes IE contract (excluding ARRA), IE voucher (excluding teen parent), Supportive contract, Supportive voucher, Teen Parent contract, IE Teen Parent voucher, DTA voucher (excluding teen parent), DTA Teen parent voucher, ARRA contract (excluding Head Start wrap), ARRA contract Head Start wrap, ARRA voucher (excluding head start wrap), ARRA voucher Head Start wrap	53787	57738	64577	70980	75483
<i>DPH- DATA SOURCE for PART C is the 618 data, Table 1Dec/October 1 Child Count. This data reflects the number of enrolled children at one point in time with an IFSP. The cumulative child count for the number of children who received a service is as follows: FY 2007- 29,546; FY 2008 – 30,771; FY2009 – 32, 350; FY2010 - 32,327; and FY 2011 – 31,262.</i>					

²⁸ Include all Children with High Needs served with both Federal dollars and State supplemental dollars.

²⁹ Note to Reviewers: The number of children served reflects a mix of Federal, State, and local spending. Head Start, IDEA, and CCDF all received additional Federal funding under the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which may be reflected in increased numbers of children served in 2009-2011.

³⁰ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-6 : Current status of the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards			
<i>Please place an “X” in the boxes to indicate where the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards address the different age groups by Essential Domain of School Readiness</i>			
Essential Domains of School Readiness	Age Groups		
	Infants	Toddlers	Preschoolers
Language and literacy development	X	X	X
Cognition and general knowledge (including early math and early scientific development)	X	X	X
Approaches toward learning	X	X	X
Physical well-being and motor development	X	X	X
Social and emotional development	X	X	X
<i>[Enter text to explain or clarify information as needed]</i>			

Table (A)(1)-7: Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State					
<i>Please place an “X” in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.</i>					
Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Universal preschool and 391 grant</i>		X (Universal Preschool)			
Early Head Start and Head Start³¹	X	X	X	X	
Programs funded under IDEA Part C		X	X	X	
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	X	X			X

³¹ Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

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

Please place an “X” in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.

Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	X	X			
Programs receiving CCDF funds					Progress Reports
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>	X (level 2-4)	X (level 2-4)	X (level 2-4)	X (level 2-4)	
State licensing requirements					Progress Reports
Other <i>Describe:</i>					
<i>Massachusetts Part C does not screen for EI eligibility as all children referred to the system receive eligibility assessments. Screening for EI is traditionally completed by primary care physicians and other community early childhood providers. Formative Assessment includes the Battelle Developmental Inventory – 2, the ASQ-SE and other measures as appropriate for the child’s needs. This information is utilized in ongoing IFSP development in establishing functional outcomes and strategies. The Health and Safety Standards specify indicators to promote early learning environments. The Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child interaction is accomplished through ongoing supervision at the local program level and through parent feedback through the NSCEAM Family Survey.</i> Title I funds can be used to pay for screening and assessments for Title I students (just the targeted students in a Targeted Assistance program and all students in a Schoolwide program). In general, Title I funds can be used to pay for any academically related services and materials that will help improve achievement of Title I students.					

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State

Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.

Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Universal Preschool and 391 grant</i>	X	X (391 Inclusive Preschool)	X		
Early Head Start and Head Start	X	X	X	X	
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	X	X- part of the comprehensive multidisciplinary evaluation	X		
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	X	X			
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA		X			
Programs receiving CCDF funds	X	X	X		
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>	X (level 1-4)	X (level 2-4)	X (level 1-4)	X (level 2-4)	
State licensing requirements	X	X	X (oral health)		
Other					

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State

Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.

Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other
<i>Describe:</i>					
Massachusetts Part C Health & Safety Standards are based on the Health and Safety regulations of the Department of Early Education and Care and on Caring for Our Children: National Health & Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-Of- Home Care. Title I funds can be used to pay for screening and assessments for Title I students (just the targeted students in a Targeted Assistance program and all students in a Schoolwide program). In general, Title I funds can be used to pay for any academically related services and materials that will help improve achievement of Title I students.					

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: UPK and 391</i>	391 (Inclusive Preschool): Funds can be used to Facilitate parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities. Universal Preschool: Enhance current or provide new family engagement activities.
Early Head Start and Head Start	Programs must meet all required federal family engagement requirements including but not limited to: 1) meetings and interactions with families must be respectful of each family's diversity and cultural ethnic background, 2) In addition to involving parents in policy-making decisions and operations, programs must provide parent involvement and education activities that are responsive to the ongoing and expressed needs of the parents, both as individuals and as members of the a group, 3) Opportunities must be

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	provided for parents to enhance their parents skills, knowledge, and understand of the educational and developmental needs and activities of their children and to share concerns about their children with program staff, 4) Programs must provide health, nutrition and mental health education programs for parents and families, and 5) Provide parent education activities that include opportunities to assist individual families with food preparation and nutritional skills.
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	The Massachusetts Parent Leadership Project (PLP) promotes lifetime advocacy, leadership skills and the development of an informed parent constituency which encourages a family centered approach to the provision of early intervention services. In FFY 2009, 6,689 parents received the Parent Perspective newsletter, a periodic publication developed by the Early Intervention PLP, with funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The Parent Perspective newsletter, a free newsletter written by parents, is for parents of children who are or have been in early intervention, early intervention providers and interested others. It provides information about the early intervention system and about opportunities for family involvement in the system. The PLP regularly solicits input from readers to ensure that newsletter content meets family identified needs. There is also a resource section and calendar of training opportunities, conferences and workshops. Information and FAQs about the NCSEAM Family Survey and the lead article written by a family member about how they have benefited from family engagement efforts are translated into Spanish for each edition. 188 parents participated in a variety of training/skill building activities including the Massachusetts Early Intervention Consortium Conference, Essential Allies, and Conference calls for Parent Contacts, Digital Story Telling and the EI Orientation Training, Building a Community. All Early Intervention Training Center professional development offerings include a parent facilitator to bring the parent perspective and voice to trainings. Two Digital Stories were developed in collaboration with the Early Intervention Training Center (EITC) and the PLP. Digital Stories are multimedia life stories produced by families telling stories of their own lives.

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	The stories represented powerful messages regarding two families experience and journey in EI. The stories are currently being utilized in the EITC workshops to generate discussion with staff regarding the families experience in EI. One story focused on the role of the services coordinator and the other on supporting the family throughout the IFSP process. Additional stories will be developed in the upcoming year to share with families with the goal of impacting family outcomes. The Lead Agency continues to work on the development of training modules for families; EI Overview; the IFSP Process; Family Rights/Due Process and Parent Leadership. The modules will provide an opportunity to share information about the EI system with families and support them in understanding their rights and ways to effectively communicate their child's needs. The ECO Stakeholders have developed a Fact Sheet for families, providers and referral sources that raises awareness of the importance of measuring child and family outcomes and integrates two pieces of important information: Family and Child Outcomes and IFSP Development. The Fact Sheet has been translated into Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole and will be disseminated to families on a consistent basis at the program level.
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	Parent involvement under the regulation includes parent consent and right to waive assessments, progress reports sent to parents at least as often as report cards, participation of parents of children with disabilities on state and local special education advisory councils, and the dissemination of a parent survey for Indicator 8 - Schools Facilitated Parent Involvement as a Means of Improving Services and Results for Children with Disabilities. In addition, LEAs are required to hold at least one workshop annually within the district on the rights of parents/guardians and students in special education; approved public or private day, residential special education programs, and educational collaboratives must have a written plan for involving parents, as well as a Parents' Advisory Group.

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	There are also family engagement initiatives that are determined locally.
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	Title I preschool programs must develop or revise an existing parental involvement policy, host an annual parent meeting on the Title I preschool program, provide opportunities for training parents to support the student at home, assess parents regarding their opportunity for involvement in the program, inform parents of their children's progress, and inform parents of the results of the Annual Review meeting. Where appropriate, parents of children in a Title I preschool program may participate in relevant professional development activities along with teachers
Programs receiving CCDF funds	State licensing regulations require all programs (family child care, group care and school age) to 1) encourage and support a partnership with the involvement of parents in the early education and care of their children; 2) parent communication; 3) parent input, 4) parent visits, 5) Enrollment meetings, 6) written information for parents (progress reports, medication training of staff, policies and procedures), 7) parent conferences, and 8) notifications to parents (injuries, change in educators, changes in program policies or procedures).
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements <i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i>	Specific QRIS requirements: Level 1: All licensing requirements (State licensing regulations require all programs (family child care, group care and school age) to 1) encourage and support a partnership with the involvement of parents in the early education and care of their children; 2) parent communication; 3) parent input, 4) parent visits, 5) Enrollment meetings, 6) written information for parents (progress reports, medication training of staff, policies and procedures), 7) parent conferences, and 8) notifications to parents (injuries, change in educators, changes in program policies or procedures). Level 2: All requirements for Level 1 plus 1) Programs offer opportunities for parents to meet with classroom staff at least monthly, 2) Program has developed informational materials on the program that are in the language of the community and are available for staff to use in the community and are given to prospective families, 3) Program maintains ongoing communication

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	with the school/early intervention program, Coordinated Family and Community Engagement grantee, mental health providers to facilitate collaboration and coordination of services that support child and families, 4) Program participates in community events, 5) Program completes Strengthening Families Self-Assessment and uses data to engage in continuous improvement. 6) Programs have a written admissions policy that promotes an awareness of and respect for differences among children and families, a respect for the child and their family's culture and language, and is responsive to the inclusion of a variety of learning needs., 7) Communication and updates on the program are provided at least quarterly to staff and families in their primary, or preferred, language to the extent appropriate and possible. Level 3: All requirement for Level 2 plus 1)A daily two way communication system is available between educators and families through a variety of means, 2) Families are encouraged to volunteer in the program, to assist in the classroom, and share cultural and language traditions or other interests such as their jobs, hobbies and other relevant information., 3) Program ensures that there are translators available, as needed, at meetings, workshops and conferences to ensure strong communication between program and families, 4) Program participates in local community group work that is related to early childhood, and the cultural groups served by the program and/or family support, 5) Program ensures young children and their families have access to developmental, mental health, and nutrition services either through private pay arrangements or are offered such services through other programs. Level 4: All requirements for Level 3 plus 1) Parents participate on the Advisory Board for the program and are actively involved in the policy and decision making for the program, 2) Program provides or connects families to education, training and support programs (such as family literacy, adult education, job training, child development, parenting, English as a second language etc.), 3) Program ensures all children and families have access to comprehensive screenings, referrals and services including developmental screening, mental health screening, speech screening, speech therapy,

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	physical therapy, occupational therapy, dental health care and nutrition services.
State licensing requirements	State licensing regulations require all programs (family child care, group care and school age) to 1) encourage and support a partnership with the involvement of parents in the early education and care of their children; 2) parent communication; 3) parent input, 4) parent visits, 5) Enrollment meetings, 6) written information for parents (progress reports, medication training of staff, policies and procedures), 7) parent conferences, and 8) notifications to parents (injuries, change in educators, changes in program policies or procedures).
Other <i>Describe: Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE)</i>	CFCE grantees are required to promote family education and literacy through activities that 1) recognize parents as their child's first teacher , 2) build on family strengths , 3) bolster parental leadership , 4) create parental opportunities for mutual support and social connections , and 5) build early and family literacy skills . CFCE's also act as a community based, information and resource hub for all families in order to increase knowledge of and accessibility to high-quality early education and care programs and services for families with children birth through age 8 and facilitate access to consumer education, technical assistance, training and professional development that support individual competency development; and facilitate access to comprehensive services that support the needs of children and families while promoting program advancement in the Quality Rating and Improvement System.
[Edit the labels on the above rows as needed, and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]	

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials³² currently available in the State				
List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the State	If State has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? <i>(Yes/No/Not Available)</i>	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
		#	%	
Teacher: Preschool	Yes	18961	50.57%	Number of active educators in PQ registry (active and pending) with certifications in PQ database
Teacher: Infant/Toddler	Yes	13208	35.23%	Number of active educators in PQ registry (active and pending)
Lead Teacher: Preschool	Yes	10409	27.76%	Number of active educators in PQ registry (active and pending)
Lead Teacher: Infant Toddler	Yes	4171	11.12%	Number of active educators in PQ registry (active and pending)
Director I	Yes	5385	14.36%	Number of active educators in PQ registry (active and pending)
Director II	Yes	4165	11.11%	Number of active educators in PQ registry (active and pending)
<i>Includes individuals with credentials in Early Childhood Education indicated in the Professional Qualifications Registry as of September 19, 2011</i>				

³² Includes both credentials awarded and degrees attained.

Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators

List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year	Does the entity align its programs with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? (Yes/No/ Not Available)
1. MA Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)	20,411	EEC issues certification for teachers, lead teachers, and directors working in EEC licensed group child care programs serving infants, toddlers, and preschool age children.
2. MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE)	12,641 educators are licensed by ESE for grade PreK-2	ESE PreK-2 licensure is intended for educators working in MA public schools in grades preschool through grade 2.
3. American College International	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
4. Anna Maria College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
5. Atlantic Union College	Not available	Not available
6. Bay Path College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
7. Becker College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
8. Berkshire Community College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.

Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators

List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year	Does the entity align its programs with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? (Yes/No/ Not Available)
9. Boston College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
10. Boston University	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
11. Bridgewater State College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
12. Bristol Community College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
13. Bunker Hill Community College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
14. Cambridge College	Not available	Not available
15. Cape Cod Community College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
16. College of Our Lady of Elms	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
17. Curry College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.

Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators

List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year	Does the entity align its programs with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? (Yes/No/ Not Available)
18. Dean College	Not available	Not available
19. Eastern Nazarene	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
20. Endicott College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
21. Fisher College	Not available	Not available
22. Fitchburg State College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
23. Framingham State College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
24. Gordon College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
25. Greenfield Community College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
26. Holyoke Community College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
27. Lasell College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.

Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators

List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year	Does the entity align its programs with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? (Yes/No/ Not Available)
28. Lesley College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
29. Mass Bay Community College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
30. Mass College of Liberal Arts	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
31. Massasoit Community College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
32. Merrimack College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
33. Middlesex Community College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
34. Mount Holyoke College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
35. Mount Ida College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
36. Mount Wachusett Community College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.

Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators

List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year	Does the entity align its programs with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? (Yes/No/ Not Available)
37. North Shore Community College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
38. Northern Essex Community College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
39. Pine Manor College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
40. Quincy College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
41. Quinsigamond Community College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
42. Regis College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
43. Roxbury Community College	Not available	Not available
44. Salem State College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
45. Simmons College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements. Simmons College will no longer offer their ECE degree program after 2015.

Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators

List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year	Does the entity align its programs with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? (Yes/No/ Not Available)
46. Smith College	Not available	Not available
47. Springfield College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
48. Springfield Technical Community College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with EEC Core Competencies.
49. Stonehill College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
50. Tufts University	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements. Tufts University is in the process of restructuring their teacher preparation program.
51. University of Massachusetts Amherst (University Without Walls)	Not available	Not available
52. University of Massachusetts Boston	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
53. Urban College of Boston	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with EEC Core Competencies.
54. Westfield State College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.

Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators

List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year	Does the entity align its programs with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? (Yes/No/ Not Available)
55. Wheaton College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with ESE teacher licensure requirements.
56. Wheelock College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
57. Worcester State College	Not available	Yes, this institution of higher education is aligned with both ESE teacher licensure requirements and EEC Core Competencies.
[Add additional rows as needed and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]		

Table (A)(1)-12: Current status of the State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment					
State's Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Essential Domains of School Readiness				
	Language and literacy	Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development)	Approaches toward learning	Physical well-being and motor development	Social and emotional development
Domain covered? (Y/N)					
Domain aligned to Early Learning and Development Standards? (Y/N)					
Instrument(s) used? (<i>Specify</i>)					
Evidence of validity and reliability? (Y/N)					
Evidence of validity for English learners? (Y/N)					
Evidence of validity for children with disabilities? (Y/N)					
How broadly administered? (<i>If not administered statewide, include date for reaching statewide administration</i>)					
Results included in Statewide Longitudinal Data System? (Y/N)					

Table (A)(1)-13: Profile of all early learning and development data systems currently used in the State							
List each data system currently in use in the State that includes early learning and development data	Essential Data Elements						
	Place an "X" for each Essential Data Element (refer to the definition) included in each of the State's data systems						
	Unique child identifier	Unique Early Childhood Educator identifier	Unique program site identifier	Child and family demographic information	Early Childhood Educator demographic information	Data on program structure and quality	Child-level program participation and attendance
Child Care Information Management System (Voucher)				X			X
Electronic Child Care Information Management System (Contract)				X			X
Professional Certification (formerly TQ)		X			X		
Professional Qualifications Registry		X					
Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)		X				X	
Licensing Manager			X				
Single Child Registry	X						
KinderWait	X			X			
UPK Grant			X				
262 Grant			X (program name)			X (OSEP indicator 6 and 7 activities and timelines)	
[Add additional rows as needed and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]							

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

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

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

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

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

(A)(2) Articulating the State’s rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals

From Birth to School Readiness: The Massachusetts Early Learning Plan 2012-1025

Under Gov. Patrick’s leadership, Massachusetts is poised to create the nation’s most effective system of comprehensive, high-quality early learning and development services to prepare children for school and promote lifelong success. **The Massachusetts Early Learning Plan** is ambitious yet achievable; it not only builds on the state's accomplishments as demonstrated in (A)(1), it is a blueprint for the state to take its reform efforts to the next level, as we work to produce strong early learning outcomes for all children, and especially for children with the highest needs.

(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;

The Commonwealth’s reform agenda builds off the EEC Board’s five-year strategic plan developed in 2009 in accordance with its legislative mandate. This plan emerged from the

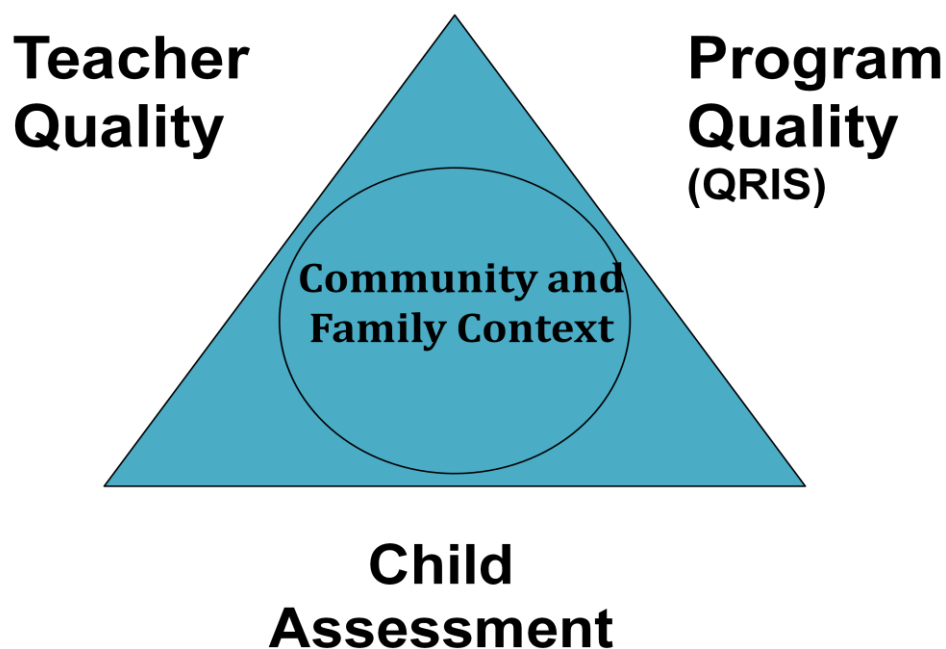
collaborative effort of a dedicated group of educators, experts, parents, EEC staff and other stakeholders.³³ Its purpose was to help the young department mature and move beyond outdated notions of child care. It outlined a core set of strategies to monitor, assess, and improve children's learning experiences in their first five years and produce greater school readiness, especially among high needs children.

The EEC Board's strategic goals:

1. Create and implement a system to improve and **support quality** statewide;
2. **Increase family support**, access, and affordability;
3. **Create a diverse workforce system** that provides supports, expectations, and core competencies leading to positive outcomes;
4. Create and **implement a communications strategy** to reach all stakeholders; and
5. **Build the internal infrastructure** to support achieving the vision.

This ongoing work forms the basis of **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**. To a large extent the goals articulated in EEC's Strategic Plan are the goals Massachusetts intends to pursue as the Commonwealth works on its RTT-ELC agenda, tailored to leverage those programs and policies that will benefit most from new funding and can be sustained over the long-term. Led by Secretary of Education Paul Reville, EEC Board Chairman and Executive Director of the Massachusetts Business Roundtable J.D. Chesloff, and EEC Commissioner Sherri Killins, the state has already made significant progress in achieving its desired outcomes. Exemplified by the graphic below, we have endeavored to improve child outcomes through distinct investments in program quality (i.e. the tiered QRIS), teacher quality, and child assessment; work that has been embedded in communities and households across the Commonwealth to touch all facets of children's lives (see section (A)(1)).

33 Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Education. (2009). Strategic plan: Putting children and families first.



By triangulating resources to strengthen key pillars that undergird children’s learning and development, we seek to integrate and align multiple policies in “one best system” to promote greater school readiness for all children. The RTT-ELC grant will allow us strengthen investments in the four areas described above—program quality, teacher quality, child assessment, and family and community engagement-while supporting emerging work in data systems and community and public school partnerships to support horizontal and vertical alignment across social service sectors and throughout the birth-20 educational system. Specifically, we will achieve the following:

8. Ensure high program quality through validation and supports for continuous improvement of programs and educators through the Massachusetts tiered QRIS;
9. Continue to support the full implementation of an aligned, validated set of standards, measured by a comprehensive assessment system as required by the tiered QRIS, including expanding screening to children who are not in formal programs or may be involved in other state agencies;

10. Link our statewide network of family engagement and community supports to evidence-based practices for literacy and family engagement to expand the availability of culturally and linguistically appropriate resources to families;
11. Increase early educators' skills, knowledge and abilities through education, training, and compensation to promote effective practice and increase retention;
12. Enhance data systems to better inform local practice and state decision-making through the Early Childhood Information System (ECIS); and
13. Link schools and communities to promote healthy child development and sustain program effects in early elementary grades through a birth to 3rd grade strategy for communities, educators and families.

It is also important to stress that while EEC's strategic plan and recent accomplishments provided a starting point for the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**, the goals outlined in this application are not the result of top down decision-making. EEC energetically engaged the early childhood field to solicit feedback on appropriate, yet aggressive approaches to addressing system gaps and improving child outcomes. Commissioner Killins held six forums across the Commonwealth and one statewide meeting and an online system was set up to receive public feedback. EEC convened a leadership team to reconcile the EEC Board's strategic plan with public feedback and turn goal statements into actionable strategies to achieve desired outcomes. EEC also held special meetings with funders, the Massachusetts Business Roundtable, the Birth-to-School Age task force and its own advisory committee. Finally, EEC reached out to a number of IHEs who are recognized as leaders in the study of early childhood education to review policy proposals and design evaluations for testing their implementation during the potential life of the grant. EEC views the RTT-ELC competitive planning process not simply as an effort to secure more funding for young children's learning and development, but as an opportunity to continue to build on the current system and identify potential best practices and study their affect on school readiness.

(b) Tasked with our goals we have built off the progress described in (A)(1) to lay out a specific path forward: the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**, which we explore below through the state's eight high-quality plans to improve child outcomes statewide throughout the four years of

this grant and beyond. A full description of each high-quality plan that meets the federal definition and includes details on the state's timeline, available resources, assigned roles and responsibilities, and, if applicable, evidence and state performance measures is provided later in the RTT-ELC application.

- 1) Tiered QRIS Validation, Universal Participation and Quality Improvement;**
- 2) Standards Validation and Alignment;**
- 3) Measuring Growth Through the Massachusetts Early Learning and Development Assessment System (MELD) from Birth to Grade Three;**
- 4) Universal Engagement of Families and the Public Using Evidence-Based Practice;**
- 5) Ensuring Competency through Workforce Knowledge, Skills and Practice-Based Support;**
- 6) Measuring Growth by Developing a Common Measure for Kindergarten Entry Assessment;**
- 7) Implementing the Early Childhood Information System (ECIS); and**
- 8) Pre-K to Grade Three Alignment for Educational Success Schools**

1) Tiered QRIS Validation, Universal Participation and Quality Improvement

Goal: Achieve maximum participation in the Massachusetts tiered QRIS, beginning with mandatory participation among programs serving the 55,761 children receiving state financial assistance.

Desired outcomes

- Increase the number of early learning and development programs participating in the state's tiered QRIS to 20% each year.
- Increase the number of early learning and development programs rated in the top tiers on the state's tiered QRIS from by 20% per year of programs enrolled in the system at levels 1 or 2, once the tool is validated.

- Increase the number of high needs children in early learning and development programs rated in to 100% of all children receiving subsidy by 2013.

Key strategies

- Increase participation in the tiered QRIS among programs serving high needs children by requiring all licensed programs receiving state funds, including child care subsidies, to be in the tiered QRIS by 2014 (fiscal year 2013).
- Provide a maximum of \$10,000 in financial supports to 500 programs (350 family child cares, 150 center-based and after school programs) for the specific purpose of achieving higher levels of quality on the state's tiered rating system each year of the grant based on the tiered QRIS standards.
- Promote the state's online registration and application review system, which provides written documentation and technical assistance to programs, including next steps required to reach higher quality tiers.
- Provide online professional development on the tiered QRIS, including 16 hours mandatory training, in the following areas:
 - Demonstrating knowledge of the tiered QRIS quality standards;
 - Develop individual modules for each set of the five QRIS standards; and
 - Identify areas for program improvement to achieve higher levels of quality.
 - Understanding the use of program and child observational assessments
- Conduct an evaluation to validate the state's tiered QRIS to ensure programs are properly rated and higher tiers and linked to higher levels of quality.
- Develop an interactive cost model as the first step toward examining strategies for providing programs with needed resources to maintain quality at higher level tiers.

2) Standards Validation and Alignment

Goal: Establish a seamless system of developmentally appropriate learning and development standards for children from birth to third grade to guide best practices.

Desired Outcomes

- Ensure alignment of the *Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers*, *Preschool Learning Guidelines* and the Pre-K Common Core (Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks).
- The state will produce standards for English language learners to address the learning needs of this population.

Key Strategies

- The state will conduct a study of how well the state early learning and development standards are aligned to the essential domains of readiness, to cultural and linguistic appropriateness, to the K-12 standards, and to the state's assessments, including the KEA (also addressed in detail in (E)(1) and (C)(2).
- The state will review model English Language Development (ELD) standards and issue recommendations on how Massachusetts could develop its own set of ELD developmental guidelines aligned with our existing standards.
- The state will produce multi-lingual brochures that convey the early learning and development standards to culturally and linguistically diverse families and educators.

3) *Measuring Growth Through the Massachusetts Early Learning and Development Assessment System (MELD) from Birth to Grade Three*

Goal: Design and implement the Massachusetts Early Learning and Development (MELD) Assessment system from birth to grade three, including Kindergarten Entry Assessments, to measure and improve child outcomes.

Desired outcomes

- Ensure all 275,000 children in early learning and development settings are screened, prioritizing the 55,761 high needs children who receive state financial assistance and the estimated 135,000 high needs children with multiple risk factors who may or may not be in formal early childhood programs. We will begin with a focus on children involved with DCF and DCHD.
- Require use of formative assessment in level three and four programs in the tiered QRIS, which an estimated 800 educators will be trained in each year of the grant.

- Ensure the effectiveness for English Language Learners of the existing formative assessments.

Key strategies

- Provide ASQ/ASQ SE toolkits to 107 Coordinate Family and Community Engagement and formative assessment tools and training for programs in the state tiered QRIS who are serving high needs children in exchange for commitments to staff compensation.
- Expand trainings on norm-referenced assessment to 76 early childhood educators, establishing a cohort of external evaluators to help validate state assessment system

4) *Universal Engagement of Families and the Public Using Evidence-Based Practice*

Goal: Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate support to families, especially families of children with high needs, to promote school readiness.

Desired Outcomes:

- Share information in multiple languages on children's learning and development and available state resources through public awareness campaign aimed at the 167,026 families in Massachusetts with children from birth to age 5.
- Strengthen statewide network and implementation of evidence based strategies of 107 strategically located Coordinated Family and Community Engagement grants to support families of children with high needs.
- Establish cohort of trainers in each of the six state regions defined by EEC to provide ongoing coaching and guidance to frontline practitioners working with diverse families.
- In partnership with the national Head Start training center, we will train 320 individuals (teams of three in our 107 CFCE grant communities) in parent, family, and community engagement by 2014

Key Strategies

- In partnership with the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimac Valley, continue to promote the "Brain Building in Progress" public awareness campaign.
- Expand successful home visiting programs in the state's highest need communities through the state's \$1.5 million Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant.

- In partnership with a national Head Start training program, train 320 individuals (teams of three) in parent, family, and community engagement aligned with the *Strengthening Families*³⁴ framework, which is already integrated.
- Provide additional, targeted support to the 107 CFCE grants to address key knowledge gaps in family literacy, finance education and planning, and children's physical and mental health.
- Formalize partnerships with the state's 15 children's museums through the innovative Countdown to Kindergarten program and the Massachusetts library. In partnership with WGBH public television, pursue innovative strategies for engaging families on healthy child development through a "school readiness" section on the *PBS Parents website*.

5) Ensuring Competency through Workforce Knowledge, Skills and Practice-Based Support

Goal: Improve the education, training, and compensation of early childhood educators *to promote effective practice and alignment with EEC's workforce core competencies, increase retention, and strengthen adult-child interactions, especially among high needs children.*

Desired outcomes

- **Professional development**
 - Increase access to practice-based trainings and support through the six EPS grant regions across the state and state Readiness Centers.
- **Career advancement and professionalization**
 - Increase to 58 (from 26) the number of IHEs aligned with EEC's workforce core competencies and the state's WKCF, including 100% of public IHEs and 9 private institutions, over the four-year grant period.
 - Increase to 1,341 (from 1,017) the number of early childhood educators credentialed by an aligned IHE, an 8% increase in each year of the grant.

³⁴ Kagan, L. *Strengthening Families* framework self-assessment tool, an integrated effort aligned with DCF, CTF and DPH (See (B)(3)) to help programs make small but significant changes to their day to day practice to build protective family factors, which include methods to create social connections, resiliency, meeting concrete needs, understanding growth and development and social emotional development of the child.

- Increase the number of early childhood educators achieving professional credentials at each level of the higher education system, including:
 - CDA/EEC Certificates to 4,571 (from 4,001);
 - Associate degrees to 2,320 (from 1,020)
 - Bachelor's degrees to 1,357 (from 557)
 - Post graduate degrees to 303 (from 103)
- **Compensation**
 - Provide stipends to early childhood educators who act as teacher leaders in their programs and provide mentoring or coaching or norm referenced assessment as a part of the Massachusetts' early learning and development system.
 - Continue to develop private partnerships to promote outside investment in children's early learning and development.

Key Strategies

- Dedicate funds (to the organizations currently receiving EPS grants) to incentivize early educators to participate in both online and traditional courses focused on educating high needs children across the essential domains of school readiness (e.g. language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches toward learning, physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development), tiered QRIS introduction and comprehension, and child assessment practices.
- Establish a minimum of 15 coaches in each of the six EPS grant regions (90 coaches total) to implement Rochester University's Peer Assistance and Review plan, adapted to address state goals and needs linked to evidence-based assessment.
- Continue to support the Early Educators Fellowship Program, a leadership institute for public elementary school principals and community-based early childhood providers.
- Promote an IHE's innovative program to assist English Language Learners in achieving higher academic credentials.
- Invest in an IHE's development of an Advanced Certificate in Early Education Research and Policy Leadership, designed to create leadership within the early childhood field at the post-graduate level.

- Invest in the state Readiness Centers to provide professional development to kindergarten teachers and early childhood educators specifically in child assessment and data use.
- Allocate \$5,000 to \$10,000 for quality enhancements to 500 center-based, family child care, and after school programs participating in the state's QRIS. Programs must increase compensation for early childhood educators to receive funding and move to the next level of tiered QRIS within 18 months.
- In partnership with the Bessie Tarrt Wilson Foundation, continue to explore new strategies for increasing early childhood educator compensation, including an early educator tax credit and a early educator endowment fund.
- Build on the state's partnership with WGBH public television, created through the first Race to the Top, to create an online curriculum hub for early educators linked to media designed to aid teaching and learning linked to the state standards.

6) *Measuring Growth by Developing a Common Measure for Kindergarten Entry*

Assessment

Goal: The state will implement the Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA) to produce a common statewide measure of children's school readiness.

Desired Outcomes

- Assess children's growth and learning, using a formative assessment, across all essential domains of school readiness.
- Inform classroom practice and strengthen professional development, leading to more individualized teaching to improve children's learning.
- Provide new sources of data about children's school readiness status to share with educators, families, schools, communities, and the state.
- Develop a valid and reliable common statewide metric of school readiness that produces data that can be aggregated to the state level to provide information about school readiness gaps.

Key Strategies

- Secure MOU between EEC and DESE to enable data sharing and implement a common approach to kindergarten entry assessment.

- Train kindergarten teachers on the use of formative assessment as a measure of school readiness and the effective use of data to inform instruction and curriculum planning through state Readiness Centers (see section (D)(2)).
- Assess degree of alignment between state learning standards and approved formative assessment tools including a focus on inclusion of English Language Development Standards or identification of gaps.
- Integrate the MKEA the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium's kindergarten to grade two assessments.
- Evaluate approved kindergarten readiness assessment tools for their appropriateness, validity, and reliability using norm-referenced assessments for high needs children including those whose home language is not English.
- Conduct psychometric testing, such as item analysis, of approved assessment tools to develop a common statewide kindergarten readiness metric.
- Establish Readiness Centers to provide assessment technical assistance support to teachers and schools
- Input kindergarten readiness data into the state's P-20 database to support Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS).

7) Implementing the Early Childhood Information System (ECIS)

Goal: Complete development of the Early Childhood Information System (ECIS), the horizontal, cross-agency leg of our state's vertical Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) with the specific goal to track children's progress and allow information to be shared with educators and families, while creating an early warning system for targeted intervention of high needs children.

Desired outcomes

- Collect socio-economic, demographic and educational data on all 275,000 children in early learning and development settings to increase knowledge of program enrollment, use, and outcomes.
- Collect children's demographic data (such as birth date, gender, race, ethnicity, language, disability status, etc.).

- Report on the status of children across ages and over time, encompassing data on home and community environments.
- Document child outcomes across developmental domains (including health, early literacy, and social-emotional development) that can be linked across sectors, agencies, and programs (e.g. infants/toddlers, preschool, Early Intervention, family childcare etc.).
- Assist in the identification of early warning indicators beginning at birth.
- Ensure confidentiality of child and family data, adhering to the privacy requirements of both HIPAA and FERPA, and seeking parental consent when necessary.
- Support geographic analysis useful to EEC, other state agencies, and communities that are engaged in Birth-5 strategic planning, resource management, program improvement, and accountability.
- Provide internal and external policy makers, EEC staff, researchers, and other stakeholders with early childhood data in diverse formats.
- Link parents to state and local community resources and opportunities.

Key Strategies

- Continue to assign unique student identifiers by working collaboratively with EEC, ESE, DPH and other participating state agencies who have agree to share data in this system.
- Utilize the state's unique governance structure to support communication across state agencies and facilitate joint efforts to effectively integrate health, housing, child welfare/foster care, anti-poverty services for young children. Increase the utilization of data on subsidy children regarding service history programs and attendance as well as age of entry and length of engagement
- Increase the state's ability to:
 - Collect child data on non subsidy engaged children in EEC funded programs
 - Collect consent information and multiple assessment scores over time
 - Identify families or children engaged with other MA agency programs

- Note children in early intervention, homeless or head start and subsidy initiatives
- Match multiple child risk factors including those that involve multiple agencies
- Send messages to families or providers in an automated or scheduled manner via text, email or phone calls

8) *Pre-K to Grade Three Alignment for Educational Success in School (See: Priority #4)*

Goal: EEC and ESE will work in collaboration to establish MOUs with local school districts to create sustainable strategies for smoothing transitions and improving educational experiences for children in early learning settings from birth through third grade.

Desired Outcomes:

- Dedicate aid to local school districts to sustain early learning program effects in the early elementary grades, beginning with the state's 17 highest need communities.
- Secure kindergarten entry assessment data from the 309 school districts with pre-kindergarten and kindergarten class and include in the state's SLDS.
- Create effective partnerships between 107 CFCE grantees and local early learning initiatives, such as the Boston Children Museum's Countdown to Kindergarten, to support successful school transitions.

Key Strategies:

- Implement the statewide MELD and MKEA to produce a common measure to assess children at kindergarten entry and track their learning through third grade.
- Link data from ECIS and SLDS to share information across agencies and between state and local providers in adherence with federal and state privacy laws.
- Develop cross-sector strategic plans defining local roles and responsibilities;
- Establish leaderships meetings among superintendents, principals, programs directors, and other community leaders to share resources and ideas.
- Improved teacher quality and capacity through joint professional development.
- Develop effective local partnerships to achieve economies of scale through shared space and resources.

- Provide training on data and assessment and sharing of information to smooth transitions and pathways.
- Establish collaborative efforts on family engagement.

When taken together the above high quality plans illustrate our vision for an effective, ambitious comprehensive early learning and development system that prioritizes high needs children. We have developed an effective infrastructure that includes: governance; regulations; standards; parent engagement and community outreach; workforce and professional development; guidelines and ongoing assessment mechanisms; linkages between schools and comprehensive services; and finance. Our unified data system will tie these components together, gathering information from a comprehensive approach to assessment that recognizes the multiple factors that shape learning and development. In all of our activities, we are insistent upon working with the public schools to align children's early learning services so as to sustain program effects in the early elementary grades.

(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.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts' rationale for its choice of criteria in Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E) reflects its current status toward achieving the goals outlined in its Early Learning Agenda. In other words, the state will build on investments in program quality, teacher quality, and family and community engagement for the purpose of improving child outcomes, while recognizing that bold action is needed to address system-wide gaps in data collection and child assessments. Balancing the state's priorities between areas where significant progress has been made with areas where substantial work is needed, will result in an ambitious yet achievable reform agenda.

The Selection Criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E) and rationale behind choosing these specific criteria to address in this application are listed below and referenced in Tables (A)(1)6-13. We selected these criteria based on their overall alignment with the reform agenda outlined above.

Selection Criteria C - Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The state will address **(C)(1) developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards** because having taken a bold step to develop the *Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers, Preschool Guidelines*³⁵ and include pre-kindergarten in the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks* (which incorporate the common core standards)³⁶ we know that it is now time to ensure that early learning and development practices align with child development research that documents what it takes to promote positive child outcomes. Detailed in section (C)(1) are specific strategies to ensure state standards are aligned with the formative assessment and ways to improve our standards effectiveness for English Language Learners in particular. The standards already are included in the tiered QRIS, fully implemented into teacher practice through professional development (including site-based coaching and online courses), and promoted through public awareness campaigns to inform families about developmental benchmarks.

Second, the state will address **(C)(2) supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems** because we know state investments in program and teacher quality and family and community engagement must be matched by a willingness to analyze child outcomes, promote best practices while individualizing teaching and learning and remedy ineffective policies. In section (C)(2) we will outline our full strategy for assessing children's learning and development at key points in their development, including kindergarten entry, and monitoring their progress through universal screenings and ongoing formative assessment from birth to grade three. We will also present plans to validate our assessment system as it relates to standards in partnership with IHEs using norm referenced testing,

Simply put, we understand that high, fully aligned standards and rigorous assessments are key to closing the school readiness gap and ensuring all children succeed in school.

35 Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers, Preschool Guidelines, Retrieved from: http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=edumodulechunk&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Government&L2=Departments+and+Boards&L3=Department+of+Early+Education+%26+Care&sid=Eoedu&b=terminalcontent&f=EEC_research_planning_20110628_curriculum_learning&csid=Eoedu

36 Massachusetts Pre-K – 12 Common Core Standards. Retrieved from: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/commoncore/>

The state will also address **(C)(4) engaging and supporting families** because we recognize that parents and families are children's first and most important teachers. RTT-ELC provides a crucial opportunity to build on a strong network of 107 CFCE grants strategically distributed statewide to galvanize communities around *Strengthening Families* with a focus on family literacy, reaching hard to serve families and linking programs and families to comprehensive services to support child development. In section (C)(4), we will described an innovative strategy for advancing ongoing work by collaborating with a national Head Start training organization to provide trainings in parent, family, and community engagement aligned with the *Strengthening Families* framework, as well as implementing universal screening and evidence based early literacy strategies.

Selection Criteria D – A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce.

Massachusetts will address **(D)(2) supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills and abilities** because the state has long recognized that high-quality adult-child interactions in programs are critical to producing successful child outcomes. The state finds itself at a turning point in its efforts to advance the early childhood workforce. Over the last few years, significant investments have been made to better structure early educators career trajectories. The state has created a workforce knowledge and competency framework (WKCF) known as *EEC's Core Competencies*, which are supported by six regional educator and provider support hubs, increased access to higher education through the Early Childhood Educators Scholarship program, and increased alignment across IHEs through its course catalogue and early educators transfer compact. Yet it remains unclear whether this work has significantly advanced the field in obtaining higher credentials and new knowledge and skills necessary to improving instructional practices. The RTT-ELC presents an ideal opportunity to bring greater coherence to state investments in early educators. In section (D)(2), we will explain how current investments will be integrated with new strategies aimed at supporting all early educators, from paraprofessionals whose home language is not English to those post-graduate degrees, in achieving benchmarks aligned with the state's newly developed career ladder for education, training and credentialing. We will begin to demonstrate that the investments in early education will lead to competencies in the classroom in literacy, numeracy and executive function.

The RTT-ELC will also help drive cutting edge policy proposals resulting from the work of *The Early Education and Care and Out-of-School Time Workforce Development Taskforce*, led by the CAYL Institute, the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimac Valley, and EEC, and continued through an ongoing private partnership with Bessie Tartt Wilson Foundation to increase early educators compensation, which includes: a proposed early educator income tax credit now being considered by the Massachusetts Legislature; and an endowment fund to leverage private capital to increase worker salaries.

Selection Criteria E –Measuring Outcomes and Progress.

Massachusetts will address **(E)(1) understanding the status of children’s learning and development at kindergarten entry** because assessing children’s school readiness at kindergarten entry is essential to identifying the learning needs of children and targeting instructional and programmatic support. This point takes on added significance when discussing high-needs children who often enter school behind in foundational developmental skills and knowledge, putting them at high-risk for academic struggles throughout their educational careers. The state recognizes this is an area where its statewide early learning and development system is sorely lacking and sees the RTT-ELC application as a necessary resource for fully implementing the MKEA. In section (E)(1), we will map out our full plan for developing and implementing our kindergarten readiness assessment system, including assessing the degree of alignment between our proposed assessment tools and state learning standards, the development of a common measure to determine kindergarten readiness and ongoing learning, validation of this measure through psychometric testing, and training and support for schools conducting assessments through state Readiness Centers.

Massachusetts will address **(E)(2) building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies** because we have designed a Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) and are in the process of complementing that with the Early Childhood Information System (ECIS) as a cross-agency repository that enables educators, parents and policymakers to track students from birth through college entry and serves as an

early warning system for the need for possible interventions. We are committed to a system in which readily available, streamlined data is used as a tool for improving school readiness and closing the achievement gap, and believe our plan will move us toward that goal. In section (E)(2), we will demonstrate how once ECIS is deployed it will enable us to share and analyze an expanding number of data elements related to the health, safety, and learning of the Commonwealth's youngest children.³⁷ An effective ECIS will provide real-time data to support reduction of the state's achievement gap, which can be analyzed by the time a child is in the 3rd grade. The ECIS will ultimately utilize assessments to measure well-being and progress at various milestones throughout a child's lifespan.

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

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

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

37 Public Consulting Group. (2011). Early childhood information system (ECIS) vision document. Massachusetts Department of Early Care and Education. (pp.5).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives,

parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

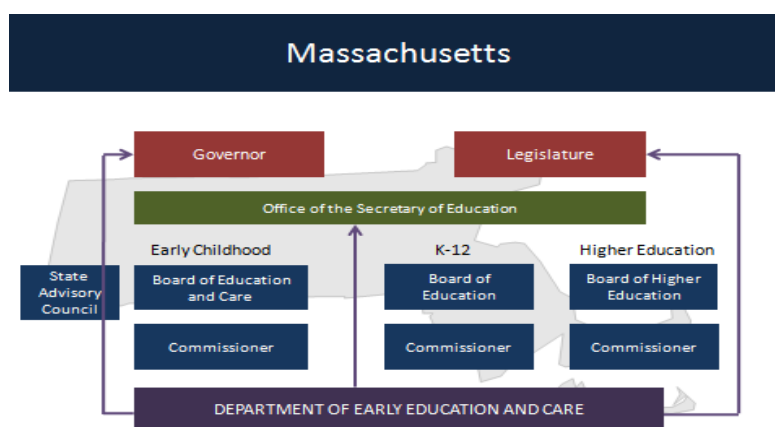
(a)

Massachusetts is one of the "most substantive examples of changed governance" for early education services, according to Kristie Kaurez, director for the pre-K-3 Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a national expert on early education and care. As noted in (A)(1), The creation of EEC and the passage of *An Act Relative to Early Education and Care*

have helped ensure strong, “investment (philosophic, financial, and political) from both the executive and legislative branches of government.”³⁸ A clear advantage of Massachusetts governance structure has been the centralized management of a systematic approach to supporting and improving young children’s early learning and development. Equally advantageous, is the public voice EEC lends to its mission and the authority to work effectively across government agencies to ensure a vertically and horizontally aligned system of services for children from birth through age 5 across the education, health care, housing and other social services sectors.

History and Current Structure

In January 2008, Governor Patrick proposed the creation of a Cabinet-level **Executive Office of Education** (EOE) headed by a Secretary of Education to oversee the Departments of Early Education and Care (EEC), Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) and Higher Education (DHE). This important change was designed to create a seamless educational system from pre-K through higher education.”³⁹



During this time, Governor Patrick unveiled his Education Action Agenda, a 10-year vision of a comprehensive public education system that begins at birth and continues through workforce

38 Kauerz, K. Sustaining Systems Change through Political Transitions (2009). BUILD Initiative.

39 Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy & Strategies for Children. (2008). (pp. 36)

development and lifelong learning. Several recommendations in the agenda, which was based on an extensive planning process that included advice from early education practitioners, explicitly focused on early education and care, such as annual funding for Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) grants. The Governor also created the **Child and Youth Readiness Cabinet**—a state leadership team with members including the secretaries of education, health and human services, administration and finance, housing and economic development, labor and workforce development, public safety and the child advocate, which aims to streamline services for all children, youth and families.

The structural sea change came on the heels of the creation of the **Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)** in 2005, when the state consolidated the former Office of Childcare Services with the Early Learning Services Unit of the Department of Education, making Massachusetts the first state in the nation to create one agency to oversee early education and care and after-school services. In doing so, the state aimed not simply to consolidate existing programs, merge departments or simplify organizational charts. Instead, EEC was born from a top-to-bottom rethinking of how to orient state resources to support families in ways that are responsive to their needs. The combination of EEC's streamlined relationships with inter-agency partners and its broad scope presented an opportunity for alignment of policy, planning, service delivery, program quality improvements and supports for families, thus expanding access to early learning opportunities to hundreds of thousands of children, paying particular attention to children with high needs.⁴⁰

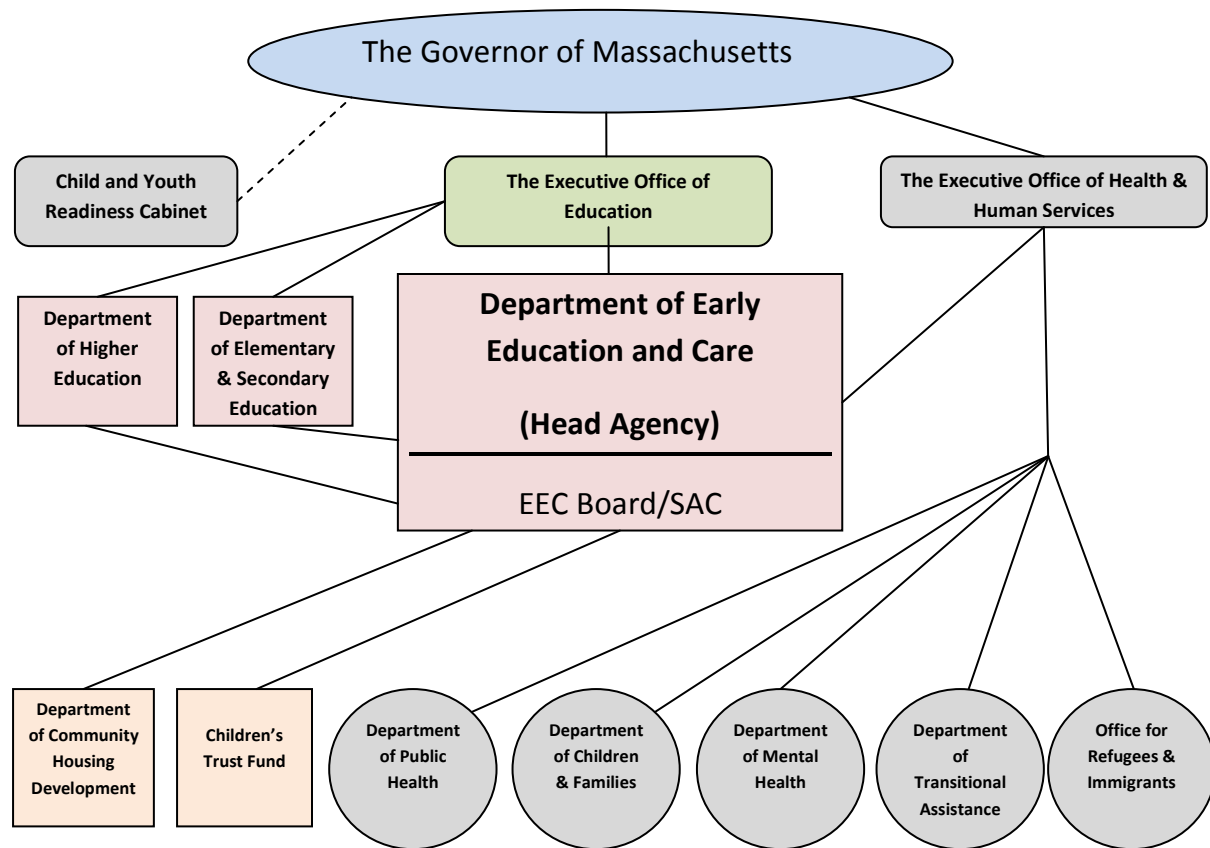
In establishing EEC, the State Legislature gave the Governor the authority to appoint a 11-member **EEC Board**, which includes the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), Secretary of Education, a representative of the business community, an ECE teacher, a parent or guardian of a child receiving ECE services, an ECE provider, an expert in evaluation and assessment of preschool programs, and a pediatrician or nationally recognized expert in educational psychology. The Board is responsible for implementing *An Act Establishing Early Education for All*. And when the 2007 Head Start Reauthorization called for states to create

40 Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Education. (2009). Strategic plan: Putting children and families first. (pp 1-2).

State Early Childhood Advisory Councils (SACs) to build high-quality universal pre-K programs, Massachusetts looked no further than the EEC Board, which also became the Massachusetts SAC.

Today, the relationships we have built with participating state agencies as a result of our innovative governance structure will form the basis for managing and carrying out the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**. Here is our organization chart that shows the connections between various state agencies involved in the grant, including hierarchy.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR GRANT MANAGEMENT



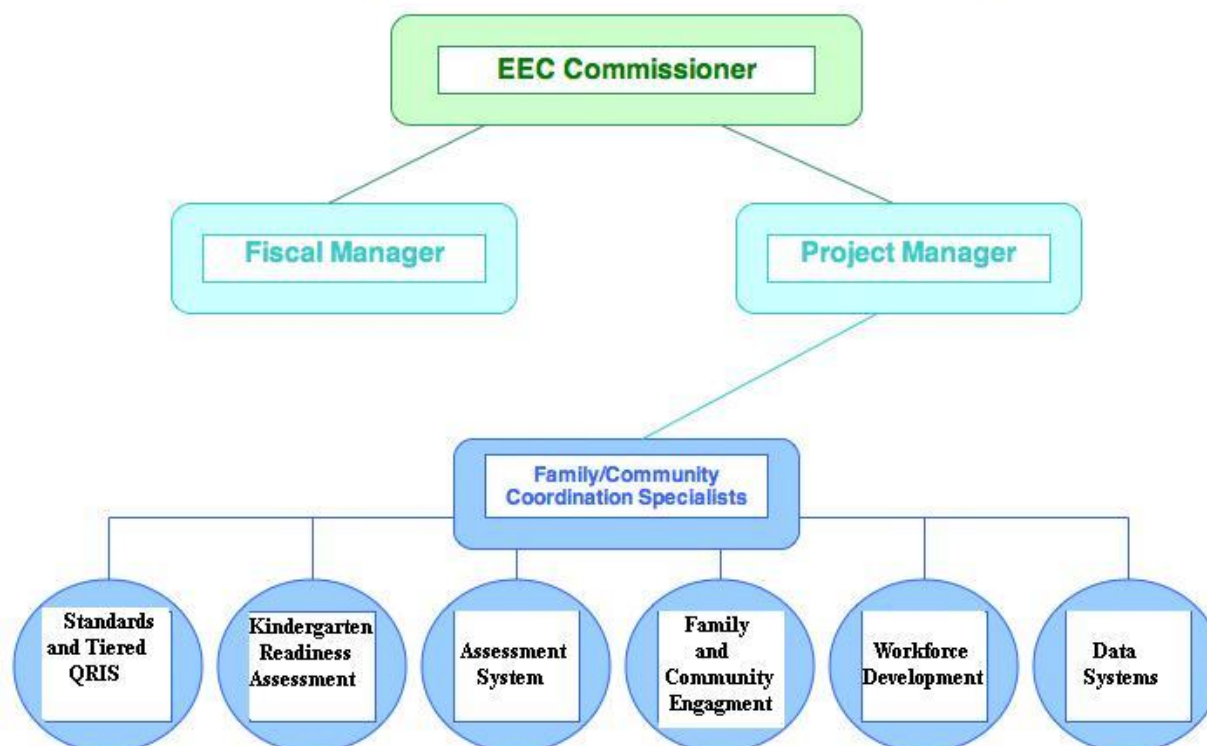
As you can see from the chart above, EEC will be the lead agency with responsibility for making implementation decisions and complying with reporting requirements. Still, the **Office of the Governor** and the **EOE Secretariat** have expressed keen interest in tracking this plan's implementation—and will be called on for high-level policy issues and communication initiatives. EEC will look to its two closest education allies, ESE and DHE, for the most support, in addition to strong alliances with the other state agencies with whom we have secured MOUs. **The Children and Youth Readiness Cabinet**, which includes the Secretaries of all participating state agencies, will be updated on progress of grant implementation and will be asked to focus on aspects of implementation that involve the need for joint actions by other agencies.

Another critical partner both now and moving forward is the **Massachusetts Head Start State Collaboration Office**, (See: Appendix DD) which is based at the EEC. The two entities work on a single agenda to create high quality programs and access to comprehensive services for children and families. Through the collaboration office the state has enhanced partnerships and mutually-developed agendas in eight designated priority areas: health care, welfare, child care, education, community service activities, family literacy services, activities relating to children with disabilities, and services for homeless children. Its Advisory Committee meets three times a year and includes Head Start parents and staff, as well as representatives from state agencies, organizations that work with low-income families, the Region I Office of Head Start and the Head Start technical assistance network. Sherri Killins, Ed.D., EEC's Commissioner, serves as the Director of the Head Start Collaboration Office to ensure the appropriate levels of access, integration and authority for the Head Start work.

The HSSC is also a member of the state's interagency Coordination Council, a group of administrators, early intervention providers, and other stakeholders convened to discuss policy and programming, in accordance with Part C of IDEA.

The following chart illustrates the staffing responsibilities within EEC, the lead agency, for managing the grant.

EEC STAFFING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR GRANT MANAGEMENT



The EEC Commissioner will lead the state's effort to implement the **Massachusetts Early Learning and Plan** and oversee eight positions created to manage the state's specific high-quality plans, while providing local support in regional offices to the early learning system. (See (A)(4)) and Appendices C, D and E for sample job descriptions.)

The positions include:

- A RTTT-ELC Project Manager, reporting directly to the EEC Commissioner.
- A RTTT-ELC Fiscal Manager, reporting directly to the EEC Deputy Commissioner of Finance.
- Six Family/Community Coordination Specialists (one in each of our six regional EEC offices) with lead responsibility for at least one high quality plan outlined in this application;
 - Standards and the Tiered QRIS;

- Kindergarten Readiness Assessments;
- Comprehensive Assessments System (screening and formative assessments);
- Family and Community Engagement;
- Workforce Development; and
- Data Systems fiscal monitoring.

As stated above, the **State Advisory Council (SAC)** is the same entity as the EEC Board. This group's role will play an active role in decision-making regarding grant activities, prioritizing, public processes, and other unforeseeable circumstances that require action. The group meets 11 times a year and engages in regular subcommittees. This structure provides EEC and its board with a unique advantage in managing a potential RTTT-ELC grant. EEC was created to manage the exact types of policy proposal included in the state's high-quality plans and has sufficient authority to see them effectively implemented. Nevertheless, we do not anticipate points of conflict given the strong history of collaboration that has been established in the state. We have every reason to expect that the EEC Board will be able to keep this project on task and that the clear set of expectations we have laid out constitute an effective system of accountability and course for correction as outline in signed MOUs (See: Appendix CC).

In addition four times a year we hold public meeting with parents, early education and childcare providers, and other community stakeholders to share updates on current activities, hear suggestions on ways EEC can better assist child and families, as required by statute. We intend to use these forums as opportunities to seek input on components of the plan that will be implemented statewide and update the public on progress over the four-year grant period.

(b) Participating State Agencies Roles in Collaboration

As shown by the following descriptions and by the MOUs that they cite, all of the participating state agencies bring important assets to the overall Reform Plan and are agreeing to take many important and concrete steps that will ensure that those assets are invested in the plan. (For complete scopes of work, terms and conditions, and signatures, see MOUs in Appendices Z-KK.

The **Executive Office of Education (EOE)** has agreed to actively support, implement and/or develop: the Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infant and Toddler and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (Pre-K Common Core); Massachusetts licensing regulations; the state's Tiered QRIS; workforce development strategies; the Early Childhood Education Transfer Compact; data sharing through the Early Childhood Information System and the Statewide Longitudinal Data System; and screening and formative assessment tools, including the development of a comprehensive kindergarten entry assessment system. As the primary state education agency, EOE will oversee the implementation of all RTT-ELC initiatives if a grant is awarded, and will ensure that EEC (as lead agency), in addition to ESE and DHE, execute their designated functions. (See: Appendix I for complete details.)

The **Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)**: As the lead agency responsible for implementing the high quality plans detailed throughout this application, EEC will work with its partners at other participating state agencies and the private sector to implement action on the state's six high quality plans for: Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, Family and Community Engagement, Workforce Development, Kindergarten Entry Assessment, and Early Learning Data Systems.

The **Department of Higher Education (DHE)** will continue to work with EEC on professional development, particularly with our Educator Provider Support (EPS) grantees (See: (D)(2)); bolstering the Early Childhood Education Scholarships; fine-tuning the Early Educator Transfer Compact; and coordinating the role of IHEs as managers of the Readiness Centers (see below). EEC will transfer \$40,000 to DHE to enable the agency to hire a half-time manager for FY 12 who will have lead responsibilities in these areas. (See: MOU in Appendix BB).

The **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education** will continue to work with EEC on aligning and implementing all pre-K activities, curriculum, standards, assessments and professional development activities with the K-12 system. The two agencies will also continue to collaborate on key activities that include programs for children with special needs; growing the Wrap-Around Zones (See: (C)(4)); setting up a joint data collection system (See: (E)(2)); collaborating on Head Start and public school pre-K programs, and serving children receiving

funds through Title I, IDEA, and state-funded pre-school programs. (See: MOU in Appendix AA).

The **Head Start Collaboration Office**, going forward we will continue to work with EEC on our existing projects and encourage full participation by individual Head Start programs in the state's high-quality plans, including: shared training across CCDBG and Head Start; linking infant and toddler and preschool standards to practice; conducting screenings and formative assessments on enrolled children; engaging parents and the larger early education and care community, including joint enrollment in childcare and head start when possible; supporting workforce development opportunities for employed educators; reporting data into the ECIS; and strengthening existing partnerships with public schools. (See MOU in Appendix DD).

The Department of Public Health (DPH) will appoint one EEC Clinical Health and one Mental Health Specialist to take the lead in embedding health guidance called for in the Early Learning Plan into multiple systems, including the Early Intervention program and the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home-Visiting Program. DPH also will utilize its Regional Consultation Programs to provide enhanced training and coaching of EEC staff around inclusion, medication administration/Individualized Health Care Plans, and behavioral health concerns. DPH will share data with EEC via the ECIS (with parental consent), develop shared data agreements with partner agencies, and work to with EEC to integrate both agencies' programs and services into existing governing entities, including the Home Visiting Task Force, *Help Me Grow* Leadership Group, and other community-level advisory committees. In addition, the agency will lead screening for children who are in state custody (Department of Children and Families), and collaborate to build a comprehensive and universal system of social-emotional screening for birth–grade three. (See: FF).

Department of Children and Families (DCF): DCF is the state agency charged with overseeing 8,000 children in foster care (40,000 children in total) and protecting children from abuse and neglect. DCF has agreed (See MOU in Appendix HH) to collaborate across six main areas: (1) child welfare\early childhood trauma and developmental consultation; (2) training; (3) data sharing; (4) screening; (5) alignment of agency priorities; (6) building on current governing and communication structures. Among its roles will be placing two developmental specialists

(one with a behavioral health focus) to provide leadership and assistance in embedding early childhood development knowledge across DCF programs, such as domestic violence shelters.

The **Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)** has agreed to activities that include that include: continuing to align and improve joint management of early childhood education and out of school time programming for homeless families by sharing data; developing an online tool to support efforts to place waitlisted homeless children in high quality early learning programs; developing a training program focused on child development for its caseworkers and shelter providers; and working with the Lt. Governor's Interagency Coalition on Housing and Homelessness and, in particular, its subcommittee on early childhood, on ways to receive feedback from homeless families about specific children's needs that need to be addressed. (See MOU in Appendix II).

The **Children's Trust Fund (CTF)**, a non-profit organization with a state-appointed board, CTF has agreed to collaborate with EEC in four main areas: 1) using resources from CTF's recent Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant to advance the Reform Plan. The grant supports expansion of the CTF *Healthy Families* home-visiting program to all 17 of the state's high need communities; 2) continuing to work with DPH and EEC to embed key components of its *Strengthening Families* self-assessment model in the operation of state services; 3) joint professional development between CTF and EEC; 4) local-level coordination between family support programming offered by CTF and EEC; and 5) data sharing with the ECIS. (See MOU in Appendix EE).

The Office of Refugees and Immigrants (ORI), for this grant, a one full-time Early Education and Care Liaison will be hired to work at ORI on the local and state-wide levels to: increase awareness in the early childhood education community of the needs of immigrant and refugee families and increase awareness of immigrant and refugee families of the early childhood education options available to them (by training CFCE grantees, child care resource and referral agencies, staff of the state's MASS 211, and early education and ORI provider agencies on how best to communicate this information to the families). ORI also will work to increase the safety and supply of quality licensed care in immigrant and refugee communities; support EEC's work related to dual language learners by informing EEC of relevant policies, effective strategies, and

national models; and provide EEC with outreach and interpreter services. (See MOU in Appendix KK).

Department of Mental Health (DMH) has agreed to work with EEC on the *Statewide Community Crisis Intervention Project* (which helps families in the aftermath of crises) and on the *Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Project*—teams of regional mental health consultants who work with primary care physicians and others to improve children’s access to treatment for mental health disorders. DMH will also establish linkages between EEC’s CFCE grantees and DMH’s *Parent Support Groups* for parents of children with mental illness; and through the *Children’s Behavioral Health Initiative*, DMH will train EEC providers on programs available for the MassHealth (Medicaid) population, such as eligibility for a mental health screening at an annual well-child visit. (See: MOU in Appendix GG).

Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA): DTA is the state agency responsible for helping low-income families meet their most basic needs. DTA agrees to continue to work with EEC to help families move toward financial independence by continuing to determine eligibility for state supported voucher child care and referrals to early education programs; provide training to DTA employees and program participants on the use of screening tools ASQ and ASQ-SE; commit to sharing data through the ECIS; and coordinate with the DPH and other agencies to refer children who are involved with DTA to additional supports if the child does not meet the eligibility criteria for Early Intervention services. (See: Appendix JJ).

As you can see above, many of these participating state agencies involve efforts to either engage new children into state early education and care programs and services via family participation of program participation. For example, DTA’s agreement to train its employees and program leaders on the ASQ screening tool effectively increases the number of early education “programs,” or more precisely, the number of young children and families, participating in this grant—directly or indirectly. Likewise for DPH and the Children’s Trust Fund – through collaboration and expanding knowledge among staff about programs for which high needs children are eligible, more children and families reap the benefits of this grant.

(c)

The state has been fortunate to gather 49 letters of support by Early Learning Intermediary Organizations across the state, indicating a broad and diverse list of stakeholders across the Commonwealth who have asserted their support for this plan. This list of supporters (See Table (A)(3)-2).

In addition, the state has secured 13 of letters of support from a broad coalition of stakeholders committed to Massachusetts' early learning plan, including the Senate President, Speaker of the House, and representatives of the Massachusetts Legislatures Joint Committee on Education, as well as members of the business community, health care community, public schools, teachers unions, faith-based organizations, early education and care providers, early intervention, special education, and public advocacy.

We believe that between our existing governance structure and the commitments we've received from both our public and private sector partners outlined above, Massachusetts is poised to begin executing this plan on day one. *We do not view this as a special project to be managed, rather the further implementation of a set of value-added plans to improve the quality of programs and the systems at the state, regional, local and programmatic levels to ensure growth and access to high quality programs for high need children.*

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
*Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)	EEC was created to oversee early learning and development across the state, providing licensing, professional development, quality improvement, support for high need children and families. It will serve as the Lead Agency for all activities outlined in this application.
Department of Public Health (DPH)	DPH oversees all public health programs in the state, as well as home-visiting and facilitating collaboration with the state's health care community. DPH oversee MIECHV grant.
Department of Children and Families (DCF)	DCF oversees Title IV Part B I and II of the Social Security Act, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, Title I and the Family Violence Prevention Services Grant.
Department of Mental Health (DMH)	DMH promotes mental health access to services through policy, treatment, and regulation.
Office for Refuge and Immigrants (OIR)	OIR administers the Mass. Refugee Resettlement Program and offers comprehensive services to refugees and immigrants.
Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)	DHCD oversees housing development, housing management and housing stabilization.
Executive Office of Education	EOE is the Cabinet-level agency that oversee the state's three education agencies.
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education	ESE is the lead entity responsible for managing the state's pre-K-grade 12 public education system.
Department of Higher Education	DHE oversees the state public higher education system, state colleges and universities.
Department of Transitional Assistance	DTA is the state agency responsible for helping low-income families meet their most basic needs, working to help families move toward financial independence.
Other Entities	
State advisory council on early childhood education and care	SAC is identified as the EEC Board, responsible for implementing federal requirements consistent with Head Start Reauthorization.
MA Head Start State Collaboration Office	A formal component of EEC whose function is to increase alignment between Head Start programs and other early learning and development programs in the state.

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Alliance of YMCAs	YES
United Way Affiliates	YES
Boston Children's Museum	YES
Local Education Agencies	YES
Institutions of Higher Education	YES
Early Intervention	YES
Federation for Children with Special Needs	YES
Mass. Assn. of School Committees	YES
Public Charter Schools	YES
Mass. Assn. of School Superintendents	YES
Mass. Assn. for Community Action	YES
Mass. Assn. for Community Partnerships for Children	YES
Mass. Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies	YES
Mass. Elementary School Principals Assn.	YES
Mass. Executive Office of Community Colleges	YES
Mass. Teacher Assn.	YES
Mass. Assn. for Early Education and Care	YES
Mass. Afterschool Partnership	YES
Mass. AEYC	YES
Mass. Head Start	YES

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
Parent Child Home Program	YES
Model Literacy Programs	YES
Readiness Centers	YES
Local early childhood councils	YES
<i>[Add additional rows as needed and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i>	

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

The extent to which the State Plan--

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(a)

In simple terms, high-quality early learning and development programs are investments in human capital, not only preparing young children for greater school success, but providing for a more literate, educated, and employable workforce. These potential outcomes help reduce education, health care and other public sector costs, while producing both immediate and long-term economic gains. In 2006, the public advocacy organization Strategies for Children

commissioned a report that found for every dollar Massachusetts invests in pre-kindergarten it stands to realize an 18% return.⁴¹

The Commonwealth's proposed budget for its early learning plan advances programs and services that are sustainable and will have such a lasting effect. It draws on existing federal, state, and local funding sources, as well as private-sector support to expand model programs and successful practices, while laying the groundwork for the next stage of reform. Our commitment is not lacking. Since the creation of EEC in 2005, more than \$4 billion dollars have been expended on young children's early education and care with a strong focus on improving the quality of their learning experiences (See: (A)(1) for a detailed discussion of this record of accomplishment.) The RTTT-ELC grant is an important opportunity to move this work forward, but it is an opportunity we can take advantage because of existing investments in our early learning and development system.

Below we examine some specific investments that will enable us to move the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan** into its next phase. These investments reflect current allocations in FY12 and, where possible, projected investments for future years contingent on future state and federal budget allocations (See Table (A)(4)-1)).

Massachusetts early learning and development funding

State funds

The Massachusetts FY12 budget for the Department of Early Education and Care totals more than \$500 million. Over 90% of these funds are used to provide accessible and affordable child care to the state's 135,000 High Needs children—30% of all children under the age of 6. Recently, the state has taken bold steps to expand the purpose of these funds. Early learning and development programs receiving state subsidies are now required to meet specific quality criteria, including participation in the tiered QRIS. Center-based programs funded by CCDBG must be NAEYC accredited by May 31, 2012. The action has transformed EEC's approach to

⁴¹ Belfield, C. R. and McEwan, P. J. (2005). *An Economic Analysis of Investments in Early Childhood Education in Massachusetts*. Boston, MA: Strategies for Children.

financing high-quality early education and care and aligned it more fully with its overarching vision of ensuring all High Needs children have early learning experience and enter school ready to succeed.

The remainder of EEC's budget is committed to quality enhancements designed to strengthen and expand the states still developing early learning and development system. In FY12, this amounted to \$40.6 million in state funds. Investments in policy areas supporting the state's high-quality plans include the following:

- **Program quality supports:** \$16 million in direct aid to programs, including: approximately \$1 million to facilitate participation in our new Tiered QRIS; \$7.5 million for Universal Pre-Kindergarten grants to help programs meeting high-quality standards achieve and maintain levels 3 and 4 on the QRIS; and \$7.5 million in supplemental funding for Head Start to support program quality enhancements (See: Section (B)).
- **Early learning and development standards:** The state has established a comprehensive set of early learning standards, including pre-kindergarten standards as part of the adoption of the Common Core standards, and devoted funding to increase their alignment with practice. One example is \$355,000 allocated for the Common Core Data Project.
- **Comprehensive assessment system:** \$432,000 toward the development of the Massachusetts Early Learning and Development (MELD) assessment system (See: (C)(2)), including \$200,000, pending state supplemental budget approval, for the **Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA)** (See: (E)(1)).
- **Family and community engagement:** \$13.6 million for Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grants to provide a statewide network of family supports. Additional allocations include: \$5.9 million to our child care resource and referral agencies; \$10.5 million to the Children's Trust Fund for parent support and home-visiting programs; \$800,000 for *Reach out and Read*; and \$750,000 for mental health grants. (See: (C)(4) for discussions of these initiatives).

- **Early childhood workforce:** \$3.2 million for our Early Childhood Educator Scholarship program to support degree attainment and career advancement for early educators and \$3.1 for professional development through 6 regional Educator Provider Support (EPS) grantees. (See: (D)(2)).
- **Early learning data systems:** \$7.8 million for the **Early Childhood Information System (ECIS)** and the **State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)** to strengthen horizontal and vertical alignment in data-sharing across agencies (See: (E)(2)).

Federal Funds

As noted above, a substantial portion of EEC's budget is devoted to supporting high-needs children and their families, including roughly \$233 million from **CCDF** and \$132 million from **TANF**. Additional federal funds are provide to other state agencies and may be used to enhance young children's learning experiences. In FY12, \$8.1 in **IDEA** funding was provided for children from birth through age 5 with special needs. The state received \$224 million in **ESEA Title I** funds, which may be used to support public school pre-k and other programs for young children. The state does not track Title I allocations by age group or grade level, but 3% of all public school students are enrolled in pre-k, which would amount to roughly \$6.7 million. Massachusetts also provides universal health care for children and families through MassHealth, which combines federal funding through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program. MassHealth was funded at \$10.4 billion in FY12 and provided coverage for 535,000 children from birth to age 18.

Massachusetts also has received federal monies specific to young children and/or their education. We were awarded a **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program** expansion grant on September 22, 2011 for \$1,463,681. A **Striving Readers** grant provided \$150,000 to develop a comprehensive literacy plan, including: early childhood and adolescent literacy, tiered literacy instruction, and the implementation of the Common Core Standards in schools and educator preparation programs. **The State Advisory Council (SAC)** created in accordance with the federal reauthorization of Head Start provided the state with \$441,226 to provide technical assistance to communities for the development of birth to 8 learning plans, extend resources to under-funded communities, including rural communities, align

Massachusetts teacher qualifications with NAEYC and Head Start, further professional development through the EPS grants and the IHE mapping project, and advance the implementation of the ECIS.

Finally, it is important to note, in 2009 the state received additional federal funding for early education and care through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). These funds were used in two ways. First, efforts were made to ensure that high needs children and their families continued to benefit from high-quality learning experiences during an incredibly difficult time. Second, funds were devoted to continuing the work necessary for build a sustainable statewide early learning and development system that will benefit all children. We devoted \$4.2 million to this later purpose: \$2.1 million was used to improve program and educator quality through establishing infant and toddler guidelines, training EEC staff on environmental rating scales (ERS), increasing the capacity of state Readiness Centers, promoting early literacy programs, supporting English language learners, and improving physical environments; and \$2.1 million was devoted to family and community engagement through a communication campaign; development of the ECIS; strengthening resource and referral services, and increasing resources for CFCE grants. These activities are ongoing and continue to benefit young children, making clear Massachusetts' capacity to effectively manage large federal grants.

Local funds

When examining Massachusetts funding landscape, it is also important to acknowledge the invaluable local contributions to young children's early learning and development made each day across the Commonwealth. From the state capital in Boston to Worcester and Springfield in central Massachusetts to the western Berkshires, a number of communities have organized early education and care collaboratives to build local capacity to support children's school readiness. *Thrive in Five* in Boston is one prominent example. With strong support from Mayor Menino and the philanthropic community, the city launched a 10-year commitment (2008-2018) to align families, educators, health care providers, and the private sector around the shared goal of greater school readiness for Massachusetts children. Another example of local investment can be found in our promise neighborhoods. The state received three Promise Neighborhood grants to support

neighborhoods in Boston, Lawrence, and Worcester. Although federally funded, these grants are the product of strong local efforts to invest in all children's learning and development.

Private funds

During the summer of 2011, a National Early Childhood Business Leaders summit was held in Boston to galvanize the business and philanthropic communities toward greater activity in young children's lives. The location of this conference, the result of strong state and local advocacy, is emblematic of the strong private commitment to early learning and development programs in services across the Commonwealth. The United Way and Massachusetts Bay and Merrimac Valley, the Massachusetts Business Roundtable, the Bessie Tarrt Wilson Initiative for Children, and the Early Education for All Campaign will reconvene Massachusetts business leaders on November 1 to maintain momentum in this area.

Of course, such recent activity is not exceptional, but rather consistent with the long tradition of public-private partnerships designed to improve the quality of programs and services for young children. One example is our implementation of Connecticut's *Help Me Grow* program, which received financial support from the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimac Valley. Another example is the Commonwealth Corporation's investment in early educators, which provided grants totaling \$843,905 to Springfield and Worcester to 251 early educators pursue higher degrees and credentials. As EEC Board Chairman and Executive Director of the Massachusetts Business Roundtable noted in his letter of support for this application (See: Appendix LL) "Massachusetts' most significant competitive advantage is its human and intellectual capital, and MBR believes that there are few better investments than early childhood education to prepare the next generation's workforce and improve the state's global competitiveness."

(c)

As noted, our state's track record of sustaining support for early learning programs aimed at children with high needs, even during difficult economic times, is very strong. We understand what it means to make investments strategically—knowing that any number of conditions could alter the fiscal landscape at any time. In crafting the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**, we

thought extensively about how we could put forth a plan whose impact would be sustained long after the four-year grant period. We came up with a three-point strategy to guide our thinking:

1. **Strengthen the basic foundation of our early learning system by increasing capacity and support from other agencies and private sector partners in the community.** Our 12 MOUs with participating state agencies speak to this effort. These joint initiatives will strengthen existing relationships and further integrate early childhood programs into other agencies' activities. In addition, partnerships with old friends and new partners will move our work forward, such as the *Brain Building in Progress* public awareness campaign; our media partnership with the public television station WBGH aimed at both educators and families; and our collaboration with the state's libraries and children's museums to build long-lasting knowledge, programming, resources, technologies, and curriculum that will endure beyond 2016.

2. **Wherever possible, target investments proposed in the grant toward ongoing work that is demonstrating success or the potential for success.** Reviewers of this application will find discussions of many different areas in which we have, especially in the last two years, invested in the building blocks of the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan** that we now will develop further. For example, we've built a tiered QRIS; now we are seeking to support programs in higher levels of quality and create a fifth tier focused on formative assessment aligned with the MKEA and data reporting. We are proposing to expand the use and accessibility of programs with a proven track record of financial stability and programmatic success, such as successful family engagement, education, and literacy models. Our Readiness Centers, which were included in the state's first Race to the Top proposal—and are geared toward strengthening alignment of professional development between pre-K and K-12 education—will be further tapped to support workforce development efforts under this proposal. Likewise, we have built a State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) and have invested in the nascent stages of developing the pre-K (ECIS) leg of that system and will use funds from this grant to fully actualize a data system that can record children's progress from birth through high school graduation in a way that allows us to make early interventions, share data, and target funding.

3. **Use grant funding for seed funding to cover one-time costs—for example, costs of getting our data and the KEA infrastructure up and running—that will propel us forward.** We have proposed a series of investments that we project will be one-time costs and whose benefits will be reaped for years beyond 2016. In addition to the ECIS data system cited above, we are investing in assessment materials and training; studies to validate both our tiered QRIS (and thus inspire further expansion of its use), standards alignment and our KEA; and coaching and mentoring infrastructure, which will have a spin-off effect on student outcomes. Our investments in financial literacy training and early reading models also are designed to have lasting effects. And, we have used our proposed investments to spark further interest in training and educating early learning educators in our state’s vibrant higher education community. We are proposing to invest in programs such as a post-Master’s certificate in early education policy and an innovative post-secondary program for educators who are English language learners.

We are confident that with strong investments made by our partners at the federal, state, local levels and from the private-sector—combined with the three-point strategy to sustain our plan over the long term—Massachusetts is on course to build an infrastructure that pays dividends for all children of the Commonwealth, particularly those with high needs, for decades to come. We are especially confident of the capacity of our reform plan to make a difference because we recognize that the return on investment in early education and development, both for the state and nation, and more importantly, for children’s lives is exceptionally well grounded in research.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

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

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

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

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

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards⁴² that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

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

⁴² See such nationally recognized standards as:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2009). Head Start Program Performance Standards. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. PDF retrieved from: 45 CFR Chapter XIII - 1301-1311 http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Head%20Start%20Program/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/Head%20Start%20Requirements/45%20CFR%20Chapter%20XIII/45%20CFR%20Chap%20XIII_ENG.pdf

U.S. Department of Defense. DoD Instruction 6060.2, Child Development Programs (CDPs), January 19, 1993, certified as current August 25, 1998 (to be updated Fall 2011). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense. Retrieved from: http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF_DETAIL_1?section_id=20.60.500.100.0.0.0.0¤t_id=20.60.500.100.500.60.60.0.0

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (2011) Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and education Programs. Elk Grove Village, IL; American Academy of Pediatrics.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

State High Quality Plan for the Tiered QRIS

Goal statement

Massachusetts' goal is provide all high-need children with access to high-quality early learning programs through statewide implementation of the Massachusetts tiered QRIS, beginning with mandatory participation among programs serving the 55,761 children receiving state financial assistance. We will support the education of early educators to fully understand and evaluate classroom and program practice with regard to high quality early education and care practice.

Desired outcomes by 2015

- Increase the number of early learning and development programs participating in the state's tiered QRIS by 20% per year of the grant.
- Increase the number of early learning and development programs rated in Level 3 or 4 or the top tiers on the state's tiered QRIS by 10% per year of the grant.
- Increase the number of high needs children in early learning and development programs rated in Level 3 or 4 or the top tiers of the state's tiered QRIS by 20% per year of the grant.

Eight Key Strategies to be Implemented by 2015

To ensure that its tiered QRIS is among the most rigorous and well-managed in the country, Massachusetts will implement eight key strategies to move the state to the head of the tiered QRIS class:

1. Provide approximately 500 stipends in the form of supplies, services, and technical assistance valued at \$5,000 to \$10,000 through the tiered QRIS Implementation Program each year of the RTT–ELC grant. EEC will award 350 family child care and 150 center-based and after school programs for the specific purpose of programs achieving higher levels of quality on the state's tiered rating system. Programs must move to the next level within 18 months from Level 2 to 3 or 3 to 4.

2. Increase participation in tiered QRIS among programs serving high-needs children by requiring programs that receive state subsidies to meet Level 2 standards by July 2013.
3. Build out and promote the state's online registration and application review system, which ensures timely provision of clear guidance to programs about the standard they need to meet to move to the next level.
4. Provide online professional development on tiered QRIS in the following areas:
 - Training in each of the core areas of standards in the tiered QRIS through the development of online courses in multiple languages, including but not limited to Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Haitian Creole for each area, including curriculum and learning; safe, healthy indoor and outdoor environments; workforce qualifications and professional development; family and community engagement; leadership, management and administration over the first two years of the grant. (These will support online overview courses that have already been developed.)
 - Training reliable monitors to conduct the tiered QRIS external and self-assessment monitoring each year of the grant and integrating the training process into EEC regional offices by July 2013.
5. Conduct a validation study of the state's tiered QRIS to ensure the validity of the rating tiers and to demonstrate their relationship to established measures of quality by January 2014.
6. Increase participation in the tiered QRIS both as a requirement for programs receiving state funding for subsidies, vouchers and programs receiving state aid for specific program needs (e.g. assessments, training, degree attainment) that support higher quality (including public preschools).
7. Build out the 5th level of quality linked to best practices and measures of child growth in the program by 2015(including the Kindergarten Entry Assessment metric).
8. Build on the existing communication and community engagement strategy to share quality information with families through the Child Care Resources and Referral Centers and the use of social media.

(B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide tiered QRIS

The state's tremendous progress in early learning since 2005 demonstrates its deep commitment to and investment in high quality, accessible early learning and development programs and services for all children, especially children with high needs. A critical next step in our strategy was the implementation in 2011 of a common, statewide tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (tiered QRIS) for all programs in the mix delivery system, including family child care, Head Start, center-based and public schools. The **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan** includes a high quality plan to take the tiered QRIS to the next level in providing access to high quality for high needs children through systemic quality improvement and continued validation of the system.

Massachusetts' Investments in Program Quality. Massachusetts has long recognized that quality must be the hallmark of the support of the state system. While the recent research has made clear the lines to healthy growth and development between health, education, economics, and human services for families, communities, and programs, many programs, parents, communities and policymakers lack a clear understanding and pathway to a streamlined definition of quality. Even as new research continues to highlight the importance of high-quality early learning in promoting lifelong success, many parents do not understand what quality is or how to find it – and many providers lack the resources and skills to provide it. The Commonwealth's reform is guided by the simple principle that all families, especially those with high needs children, must have access to high quality early learning and development programs.

Researchers and practitioners have defined the specific characteristics of a “quality” program for early learning and development as one that is attuned to the developmental needs of all children. We now know how to measure the “effectiveness factors” that often make the difference between programs that work and those that do not effectively support children's healthy development. Our tiered QRIS enables us to define, measure and communicate with parents, the legislature and funders about quality early learning, giving Massachusetts an unprecedented ability to connect high-needs children with the highest-quality services.

Massachusetts has a history of investing in early educators and quality early education programs

through supporting and/or requiring accreditation of programs even before the EEC was established in 2005. Massachusetts continues to be ranked 5th in the nation by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) for having strong licensing standards.⁴³ More recently the state underwent an extensive public review process to revise its basic licensing standards for all programs. In January 2010, the state published new licensing standards, including quality measures such as nutrition, medication administration, reading progress reports, professional development and health and safety, which provide a strong foundation for the tiered QRIS system.

One of the state's landmark initiatives to improve early learning and development program quality is the 2006 Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) grant program, which invests in quality center-based and family child care programs (including Head Start serving 3- and 4- year olds). Cumulative funding in the amount of \$45.67 million has served more than 6,000 children annually in cities and towns across the Commonwealth. The state used the grant program eligibility criteria to begin to define components of quality and as a strategic lever and incentive for programs to improve or maintain their quality. The UPK criteria required that a program be licensed or license-exempt (e.g., public school preschools, Head Start centers); use an approved evidence-based formative assessment tool; use Massachusetts standards and curriculum frameworks for preschool; provide full-day/full year services; and be accredited (or have a B.A. teacher). These criteria laid the foundation for the tiered QRIS system. A 2008 report by Abt Associates found 64% of children in UPK programs received financial assistance, making it the Commonwealth's broadest initiative aimed at improving the quality of programs, serving well over half of the state's high needs children placed in UPK programs.⁴⁴ Additionally, the state learned, through the collection of program data on formative assessment, the importance of training programs in state preschool standards and the implementation of comprehensive assessment specifically screening and formative assessments.

43 NACRRRA (2011). We can do better: NACRRRA's ranking of state child care regulations and oversight, 2011 update. Retrieved from http://www.naccrra.org/publications/naccrra-publications/publications/WCDB_Executive_summary_030711.pdf

44 Abt Associates Report (2008). FY10 UPK grant funding uses were allocated as follows: staff compensation (53%); comprehensive services (11%); professional development (7%); education materials and technical support (6%); curriculum and enrichment activities (5%); and family supports (4%).

An Act Relative to Early Education and Care passed the State Legislature unanimously in 2008. The law formally established the development of a coordinated system of early education and care in Massachusetts, which dramatically boosted EEC's enabling statute. The Legislature essentially mandated EEC to improve quality through increasing access to high quality programs; promoting standards that incorporate essential elements of high-quality programming such as health, cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional and physical outcomes; and assessing program benchmarks. A key part of EEC's strategy to support high quality (See Legislation (A)(1)) was to develop the tiered QRIS.

Massachusetts' thoughtful and deliberate approach⁴⁵ to launching the tiered QRIS began with initial investments of \$250,000 in FY07 and FY08 budgets to develop a tiered QRIS for programs participating in the UPK program.⁴⁶ EEC always intentionally included the entire early education and care and out of school system, encompassing 12,112 programs serving children from birth – school age. In 2008, EEC convened a tiered QRIS working group of diverse leaders from within the early education and care field and, with the help of national experts, drafted provisional standards for a statewide tiered QRIS. Then, EEC launched a tiered QRIS Pilot in 2010, along with 640 QRIS Program Quality Improvement grants (See (B)(2) for details) followed by a comprehensive public input process.⁴⁷ As a result of the 2010 pilot study and formal pilot evaluation process, EEC created a high quality tiered QRIS. For example, EEC worked internally with a study team of researchers to review and align our tiered QRIS standards with licensing regulations, professional development core competencies, and environmental and

45 EEC lead a comprehensive process in establishing a Tiered QRIS which involved, research, studies, pilots, public process with providers and stakeholders, reliance on data informed by evidenced based assessments, and culminated in a number of research based reports on the Tiered QRIS Pilot and Tiered QRIS Provisional Standards. Some of these reports include:

- Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), (2010). *Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System Pilot: Final Evaluation Report*, Boston, MA: Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. Retrieve from, http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/qris/20100805_final_report_eec_v11.pdf
- Schilder, D. Young, J., Anastasopoulos, L., Kimura, S. & Rivera, B. (2011). *Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System Provisional Standards Study: Final Report*. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.

46 Strategies for Children. (n.d.). QRIS: Building a high-quality early education system. Retrieved from http://www.strategiesforchildren.org/eea/6research_policy/09_QRIS.pdf

47 Education Development Center, Inc. (2010) ; Schilder, D. Young, J. *Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Provisional Standards – Overview of Public Process PPT*. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.

program assessments.⁴⁸ (See QRIS Provisional Standards Study Logic Model in the Appendix H).⁴⁹

Massachusetts' Current Tiered QRIS. In 2011, EEC officially launched Massachusetts' tiered QRIS while also providing comprehensive support (e.g. trainings, technical assistance, grants) to programs for their improvement. Its purpose is to ensure that high quality early education and care and out-of-school opportunities that demonstrate improved outcomes for children are available throughout the Commonwealth. The tiered QRIS has five components, which make up the system: standards, monitoring and accountability, program and practitioner supports, fiscal incentives, and family and consumer engagement. The state's goals for the tiered QRIS are:

- Programs and providers use one streamlined set of standards that are connected to supports and fiscal incentives to help them meet and maintain the standards;
- Programs receive feedback and are engaged in continuous quality improvement;
- Parents have easily accessible information about the quality of early care and education programs; and
- Policymakers understand where and how to invest additional resources.

The Commonwealth articulates four levels of quality and each level of rating reflects increasingly higher levels of quality. Massachusetts plans to build out the 5th level of quality linked to best practices and measures of child growth in the program, aligned with the KEA, by 2015 using RTT-ELC funds. (See (B)(1)(b)). The four-level quality rating system is designed for center-based, family, and out-of-school time care providers, and tied to five distinct indicators of quality which constitute the tiered QRIS standards: curriculum and learning; safe, healthy indoor and outdoor environments; workforce qualifications and professional development; family and community engagement; leadership, management and administration. (See (B)(1)). Each of the four quality rating levels builds on the previous level, resulting in a research-based pathway of standards to guide continuous program quality improvement. (See (B)(3)).

48 Schilder, D. Young, J., Anastasopoulos, L., Kimura, S. & Rivera, B. (2011). (pp7-17). Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), (June 2010).

49 Schilder, D. Young, J., Anastasopoulos, L., Kimura, S. & Rivera, B. (2011). (pp 8).

The tiered QRIS is a key tool to help families, communities, and policymakers understand what constitutes quality and how to deliver it to the children who need it most. The tiered QRIS supports all children and youth (birth to 13) served in settings across the Commonwealths' mixed delivery system, (school-based, center-based, after-school programs, family-based including public school and Head Start programs). Our tiered QRIS offers guidance and support to professionals in early education and care and out-of-school time settings on a path towards quality that is grounded in the science of child development.

Programs must be licensed or license-exempt to be eligible. License-exempt programs (i.e. public school preschools, Montessori schools, or faith-based affiliated programs serving infants, toddlers, preschool-age children) must submit a self-assessment that indicates that the program meets EEC licensing requirements. Licensing requirements include expectations regarding health, safety, nutrition, progress monitoring, education, literacy, and physical activity.⁵⁰ In just 10 months, approximately 2,500 of 12,000 licensed/license-exempt programs in the state have elected to participate in the tiered QRIS. Programs receiving state funding or subsidies to serve children with high needs are required to participate in the tiered QRIS as a requisite for current or future funding (See (B)(2).)

(B)(1)(a) To foster the integration and use of child development principles and practices, linked to quality, on December 14, 2010, the EEC Board adopted a set of five quality indicators called tiered QRIS standards. To ensure the strongest outcomes for children, the tiered QRIS standards incorporate:

Early Learning and Development Standards: The state's early learning and development standards are described in detail in (C)(1), and include the *Guidelines for Preschool Early Learning Experiences*, *Pre-K -12 Common Core Standards for mathematics and literacy* and *Infant/Toddler Learning Guidelines* and are linked to the tiered QRIS through the Tiered QRIS standard 1: Curriculum and Learning.

⁵⁰ Retrieve Massachusetts EEC Licensing requirements from:
http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=edumodulechunk&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Government&L2=Departments+and+Boards&L3=Department+of+Early+Education+%26+Care&sid=Eoedu&b=terminalcontent&f=EEC_programs_licensing_20110701_licensing&csid=Eoedu

Comprehensive Assessment System: The state's comprehensive assessment system is described in detail in (C)(2) and includes screenings and formative and normative assessments and are linked to the tiered QRIS through the tiered QRIS standard 1: Curriculum and Learning.

Early Childhood Educator Qualifications: The state's eight core competency areas for the early childhood and care educators' qualifications are described in (D)(2), (including academic credentials/degrees achieved, experience and specific training in early childhood), and are linked to the tiered QRIS through the tiered QRIS standard 3: Workforce Qualifications and Professional Development.

Family Engagement: The state's family engagement approach is described throughout the application, specifically in (B)(4)(a), (C)(4), and (D)(2) and is linked to the tiered QRIS through the tiered QRIS standard 4: Family and Community Engagement.

Health Promotion Practices: The state's health promotion practices are described in (A)(1)/(2), (B)(1)(c), and (C) and are linked to the tiered QRIS through several of the tiered QRIS standards. For example, standard 2: Safe, Healthy, Indoor and Outdoor Environments, standard 1: Curriculum and Learning, and standard 4: Family and Community Engagement.

Effective Data Practices: The state's effective data practices are described in (A)(1)/(2), (B), (C)(3), (D)(2) and are linked to the tiered QRIS through tiered QRIS standard 5: Leadership, Management, and Administration.

To address the unique context in which high quality outcomes for high needs and all children are achieved, the tiered QRIS standards have been customized for multiple age groups, high needs children, and all provider types. We have three different sets of overall tiered QRIS standards: 1) *Center and School Based Standards*, 2) *Family Child Care Standards* (available in English, Chinese, Haitian, Khmer, Portuguese, & Spanish), and 3) *After School and Out of School Time Standards* (See F). Center and School-based includes child care, Head Start and public school (including programs funded by Title 1, IDEA part B § 619). (See Table (B)(1)-1).

The Massachusetts tiered QRIS standards outline key indicators of quality designed to move programs to a higher level of quality in order to increase educational value and outcomes specifically for high needs children. The standards cover the following five primary categories:

(1) Curriculum and Learning. This standard includes the development and assessment of developmentally appropriate curricula, the “serve and return” interactions between teacher and child, and attention to children with special needs and diverse languages and cultures. Indicators of high quality include daily and weekly lesson plans, ongoing professional development and feedback to ensure fidelity to the curriculum model.⁵¹

(2) Safe, Healthy Indoor and Outdoor Environments. Program environments provide the framework for children’s learning and development. They support the implementation of the curriculum through the use of space, materials and opportunities for children to experiment, practice their skills, analyze, socialize, and problem solve. Quality environments also provide support for the health, safety and nutrition of young children. Indicators of quality include the designation of both indoor and outdoor spaces for play and learning that are used on a daily basis; variety of materials for nature and science, math and number activities, art, and fine motor activities.

(3) Workforce Development and Professional Qualifications. To ensure children’s healthy development, the workforce must have formalized training in early childhood education and content knowledge, along with ongoing professional development that is linked to enhanced classroom activities, increased understanding of children’s social/emotional development and its impact on development and learning. Indicators of high quality include lead teachers with bachelor’s degrees in early childhood education, and regular teachers who hold associate’s or bachelor’s degrees with a minimum of 15 college credits in early childhood education--or a minimum of 36 college credits in early childhood education.

(4) Family and Community Engagement. High-quality programs recognize the interconnectedness between the child, the family, the community and the program itself.

⁵¹ Massachusetts Curriculum Framework: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/commoncore/>

Relationships with families are built on mutual trust, respect and a commitment to involve them as full partners in their children's education. This also includes providing families with information, resources and support that they may need. Indicators of quality include the presence of an active parent Advisory Board; a program's capacity to effectively connect families to resources such as adult education and job training, and to assist families with children's development, early literacy, math, and approaches to learning.

(5) Leadership, Administration and Management. High quality programs require effective leadership with management and administrative practices that ensure a stable work environment, fiscal accountability, evaluation of the program's practices and policies and the development of relationships within the community. Indicators of quality include a clear business plan, a system of technology that allows for data collection and tracking of children's health, services received, attendance and educational information, staff qualifications, professional development and financial record keeping. In addition, high quality programs ensure that staff have paid planning time, salary scales and benefits linked to educational levels and experience, as well as opportunities to reflect on teaching practices through coaching, mentoring, ongoing supportive supervision and performance evaluations that will support education professionals through the use of a career ladder.

Each tiered QRIS standard has sub-categories with further content detail as depicted in the graphic (below). Additionally, the standards and sub-categories within each of the following sets 1) *Center and School Based Standards*, 2) *Family Child Care Standards*, and 3) *After School and Out of School Time Standards*, has detailed content uniquely tailored to its provider category.



(B)(1)(b) The tiered QRIS is clear and has standards that are measureable, 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. The tiered QRIS standards are expressed in terms of Levels, which correspond to a tiered QRIS rating. The levels are organized in a series of blocks that outline the indicators for quality within each category.

Program Excellence and Relationship to National Standards: Our tiered QRIS is designed to reflect our high expectations for program excellence, grounded in knowledge of child development, early education and afterschool program quality research, and national best practices. The standards incorporate our baseline expectations for licensing and have been cross-walked⁵² with the national models for excellence found in the NAEYC accreditation standards, NAFCC, and Head Start performance standards.⁵³ In addition, these standards are indicators of program quality. (See Appendix G for Standards and Measures Included in Crosswalk.)

As a result of our *2010 Tiered QRIS Pilot Study and Evaluation*, in collaboration with Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC),⁵⁴ we have validated the connection of our tiered QRIS

52 Schilder, D. Young, J., Anastasopoulos, L., Kimura, S. & Rivera, B. (2011). (pp11).

53 The Tiered QRIS Standards were crosswalked with 12 existing standards and measures see Appendix for Crosswalk.

54 Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC), (June 2010). and

standards to the models of excellence that exist in Massachusetts and around the country. Also as a result of our rigorous alignment approach, we have eliminated redundancies from standard to standard through the crosswalk process. Streamlining the standards makes it easier to administer the program and enhances the use by early learning and development programs and educators. For example, due in part to the revision in the licensing regulations 114 standards were removed because they were covered in the new regulations.

Measureable and Meaningful Differentiation of High Program Quality Levels. The tiered QRIS levels are organized as a progression for measureable, improved program quality. In order to ensure the Levels meaningfully differentiate levels of observed quality, we plan to work with an independent evaluator, the University of Massachusetts' Donahue Institute, to conduct a validation study. Programs are accountable for all indicators for each level in order to achieve a designated level and all indicators are measureable, as outlined in our three sets of tiered QRIS standards: 1) *Center and School Based Standards*, 2) *Family Child Care Standards* (available in English, Chinese, Haitian, Khmer, Portuguese, & Spanish), and 3) *After School and Out of School Time Standards*.

For example, programs must demonstrate that they can meet all of the standards and requirements in all of the categories in Level 1 to obtain a Level 1 rating; likewise, Level 2 requires all of Level 2 and any unique qualifications that were provided for in Level 1. This policy applies at all levels. Additionally, at Level 2 the programs are measured through assessments, described further in (B)(3).

Level 1 meets licensing requirements (even for programs that are exempt) and demonstrates the program's entry level status. Level 2 programs complete a self-assessment using tools described in (B)(3), and focus on providing a proper learning environment. Level 3 programs engage in an external assessment using tools described in (B)(3), (required external evaluator rating of 3) and emphasize focused development and quality teacher/child interactions; and must demonstrate structural indicators and reliable observation. Level 4 programs engage in an external assessment, using tools described in (B)(3), (required external evaluator rating of 5) and focus on

the full integration of program quality and actual child outcomes; and must demonstrate structural indicators and reliable observation. When programs have identified specific barriers to meeting the tiered QRIS Standards for a self-assessment (and meeting standards at any level, e.g. B.A. attainment), they may request an exemption to qualify for a rating. An exemption request allows programs to obtain a specific QRIS level rating when all but (4) four standard criteria within that level are met. Programs make a written request for each exemption through their on-line tiered QRIS application and self-assessment in the QRIS Program Manager (QPM)⁵⁵ as these exemption requests are not automatically approved. Programs may apply for up to 4 exemptions per tiered QRIS program type on their tiered QRIS self-assessment.

EEC plans to develop Level 5 by 2015, which will link high quality education and care with positive child outcomes by aligning program practices with the kindergarten entry assessment (KEA). EEC plans to accomplish this by using assessment data from the Early Childhood Information System (ECIS) (See (C)(3) (E)(2)) and aligning the data with the KEA (See (E)(1).) The RTT-ELC funds that would provide for the work described in (C)(3), (E)(1) and (E)(2) will directly support EEC's build-out of Level 5.

For examples of how the standards are clear, measurable, differentiated by level and reflect a high expectation for quality (See: the three sets of standards and correlating tables in Appendix F).

(B)(1)(c) The MA tiered QRIS is directly linked to the state's rigorous licensing system for early learning and development programs. Participation in the tiered QRIS is available to programs that are legally licensed as well as those that are statutorily exempt from licensure. License-exempt programs demonstrate they meet licensing requirements to participate in the tiered QRIS. As a result, when license-exempt programs complete their self-assessment, a plan is created and monitored to address any gaps in meeting the licensing standards at Level 1. The licensing requirements, regarded as among the most rigorous in the nation,⁵⁶ serve as a much higher-than-

⁵⁵ See QRIS Program Manager here:

http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=edumodulechunk&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Pre+K+-+Grade+12&L2=Early+Education+and+Care&L3=QRIS&sid=Eoedu&b=terminalcontent&f=EEC_qris_20110119_qpm&csid=Eoedu

⁵⁶ NACRRRA Report. (2011).

average, formidable foundation for the tiered QRIS standards. In meeting the state's licensing requirements, a program is entering the tiered QRIS in high quality standing and the tiered QRIS higher levels provide additional specific educational supports to help high needs children become school ready.

Table (B)(1)-1: Status of all Program Standards currently used in the State							
List each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the State; specify which programs in the State use the standards	Program Standards Elements⁵⁷ <i>If the Program Standards address the element, place an "X" in that box</i>						
	Early Learning and Development Standards	Comprehensive Assessment Systems	Qualified workforce	Family engagement	Health promotion	Effective data practices	Other
QRIS Standards for Center Based School Based programs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X(Program Administration, Leadership, Compensation, community Collaboration)
QRIS Standards for Family Child Care	X	X	X	X	X	X	X(Program Administration, Leadership, Compensation, community Collaboration)
QRIS Standards for After School and Out of School Time programs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X(Program Administration, Leadership, Compensation, community Collaboration)
Head Start Performance Standards	X	X	X	X	X	X	X(Program Administration, Leadership, Compensation, community Collaboration)
NAEYC Program Standards	X	X	X	X	X	X	X(Program Administration, Leadership, Compensation, community Collaboration)
NAFCC Accreditation	X		X	X			
COA- Accreditation	X		X	X	X		

⁵⁷ Please refer to the definition of Program Standards for more information on the elements.

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

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

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

(1) State-funded preschool programs;

(2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;

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

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

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

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

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

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

By 2015, Massachusetts plans to increase the number of early learning and development programs participating in the state's tiered QRIS by 20% each year of the grant. Priority 2 specifically addresses the state's plan to include all licensed and license-exempt early learning and development programs in the tiered QRIS. This section describes the policies and practices, both those in place, and those that will be implemented through our high quality plan to reach the goal with a focus on publicly funded programs. Maximizing program participation in the state's tiered QRIS includes requiring all programs to participate that 1) receive state funding through

contract for subsidies or vouchers for placement of high needs children;⁵⁸ and 2) receive state aid (e.g. stipends in the form of services, materials, trainings etc.)

(B)(2)(a) and (B)(2)(c) The state plans to have all publicly funded early learning and development programs participating in the tiered QRIS by 2014 (FY13). The Commonwealth has set ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of early learning and development programs that will participate in the tiered QRIS by type of program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) – (5).) (See Table (B)(2)(c)). The state’s projections for achieving its 2014 goal are:

- FY12 Head Start Supplemental Grants (FY12-33% program participation, FY12 66% program participation, FY14 100% participation).
- FY12 Universal Pre-Kindergarten Grants – 100% participation
- FY12 Child Care Quality Literacy Support Grant – 100% participation
- FY11 REKEEP: KEEP Before and After School Care – 100% participation
- FY11 PSCCE: Pre School Child Care Education 100% participation
- FY11 Assessment Training Grant – 100% participation (Associated)
- FY11 Quality Program Improvement Grant – 100% participation (T4Q)
- FY10 Infant-Toddler Learning Environments – 100% participation (CIF)
- As of June 2012, Family Child Care and Out of School Time programs that received funding for EEC contracted slots will be required to participate in Tiered QRIS
- FY14 ELD Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA - 100% if they are formal early learning programs. Over the next two years the programs begin to implement critical practices such as formative assessment and screening.
- FY14 ELD programs funded under Title 1 of the ESEA - 100%;
- FY12 ELD programs funded under CCDF program (e.g. contracts for subsidies and vouchers) - 100%

58 The subsidy and voucher system is available for high needs families. Families may either place their child in a subsidized program with a contracted number of slots or families may use early childhood education and care vouchers, certificates that allow families to select a provider that accepts vouchers and has space available. Contracted slots are spaces set aside for children from low-income families at specific childcare programs. The amount a family pays depends on the family income. Very low-income families get free childcare. Child care resource and referral agencies (CCR&Rs), help high needs families find safe affordable child care.

At this stage the state does not separately track in the tiered QRIS early learning and development programs funded under section 619 of part B (Special Education) of IDEA and part C of IDEA (Early Intervention), or Title I of the ESEA (public school Pre-K). However, the EEC Board discussed these program types at its October 2011 meeting. The planning and evaluation committee and the policy and fiscal committee will now suggest an implementation strategy to meet the defined goal.

The state plans to achieve its 2014 goal by:

1) Requiring all programs to participate that receive state funding through contracts for subsidies and vouchers for placement of high needs children.

The contracted programs that are recipients of subsidies and vouchers for the placement of 33,929 income-eligible high needs children are in the process of being brought into the tiered QRIS with a final cut-off date of August 31, 2012. In December 2010, EEC notified all of these providers they must satisfy accreditation requirements and/or demonstrate a specific level of quality through the tiered QRIS before contract renewal in August 31, 2012.⁵⁹ As part of the high quality plan, the state plans to increase participation in tiered QRIS among programs serving high-needs children by requiring programs that receive state subsidies and vouchers to meet at least Level 2 standards in the tiered QRIS by 2015.

Currently there are 2,523 programs in the process of registering in the tiered QRIS (1,037 in draft form; 1,407 in final status). Of the 1,407 final applications, there are 1,229 programs that serve at least one EEC subsidized child. A total of 26,323 subsidized children, which aligns to our definition of high need by presenting with at least one risk factor of family income, are being served in programs that have submitted a final tiered QRIS application.

- 536 infants in programs using contracted slots.
- 1,653 toddlers in programs using contracted slots.
- 5,350 Preschoolers in programs using contracted slots.
- 5,479 Afterschool children in programs using contracted slots.
- 685 Infants in programs using EEC vouchers.

⁵⁹ The re-procurement for this program includes an explicit new requirement around child development and participation in and movement along the Tiered QRIS.

- 2,227 Toddlers in programs using EEC vouchers.
- 4,611 Preschoolers in programs using EEC vouchers.
- 5,782 Afterschool children in programs using EEC vouchers.

2) Requiring all programs to participate that receive state aid (e.g. stipends in the form of services, supplies, trainings, etc.).

Tiered QRIS Implementation Program (TQIP). TQIP was administered formerly as Tiered QRIS Program Improvement Quality Grants, where program grant recipients purchased services to support their quality improvement and tiered QRIS implementation. We learned much from the grant program to guide initial implementation, including providers' feedback, which strongly indicated the small grants process was challenging to navigate. As a result, in the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**, beginning in the second half of 2012, EEC will convert the program from grant-based to direct implementation based on the existing system of providing services. This means eligible providers will receive stipends in the form of supplies, services, and technical assistance focused on their areas of needed quality improvement to meet standards and advance Levels.

In 2010, the state's goal with the tiered QRIS Program Improvement Quality Grants was to encourage program participation, support quality improvement that would enable programs to move up in the rating system, and to focus on initial implementation and operation. By awarding eligible programs a grant, which required tiered QRIS participation, the state was able to increase participation. In FY10, approximately 640 of the 850 programs participating in the pilot received grants of up to \$10,000 each for the purpose of supporting programs advancement.⁶⁰

In FY11, interest grew, with approximately 926 programs and educators requesting over \$7.7 million in grant funding, well beyond the resources available at that time. That year, EEC awarded \$2.8 million in funding to 449 early learning and development programs. (FY11 was funded through the CCDBG ARRA resources, which ended September 30, 2011.) Awards in FY11 were made in all 6 EEC regions and to all three program types: after-school and out-of-

⁶⁰ Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. (December 2010). Board Meeting PowerPoint Presentation.

school time, center-based and school-based, and family child care. The tiered QRIS Grants prioritized awards for programs serving high needs children, including Universal Pre-K grantees, Head Start Programs, and income-eligible contract providers (center-based, public school, family child care and school-age). This grant helped ensure high participation rates and helped EEC gain additional insight into the costs and types of support needed for programs to advance to increasingly higher levels of quality for high needs children. Grantees primarily spent funds on supplies and materials (textbooks, instructional and non-instructional materials, equipment, and contractual services with a specialist). (See (B)(4)(a) and (D)(2)). The FY12 tiered QRIS Grants RFP is now open (currently funded by EEC). Within 18 months of receiving grant funds, participating programs will be required to advance at least one level on the tiered QRIS.

After conversion to the *Tiered QRIS Implementation Program* in the second half of 2012 eligible providers will receive stipends in the form of supplies, services, and technical assistance focused on their areas of needed quality improvement to advance in Levels. Through the *Tiered QRIS Implementation Program*, the state plans to provide approximately 500 stipends to eligible programs in the form of services, materials, and technical assistance valued at \$5,000 to \$10,000 each year of the RTT-ELC grant. EEC will award (350 family child care and 150 center-based and after school programs) for the specific purpose of programs achieving higher levels of quality on the state's tiered rating system. Programs must move to the next level within 18 months from Level 2 to 3 or 3 to 4. Additionally, EEC has built a private partnership with United Way to support the development of additional private funds from the business community to support the tiered QRIS grants to programs, which would allow the state to focus on programs with high needs children while increasing overall quality.

(B)(2)(b) The state plans to ensure that high needs children are in the highest quality programs that meet their full-day, full-year learning needs by requiring all publicly funded programs to participate in the tiered QRIS by 2014 and by supporting them in their advancement. Publicly funded means programs that receive subsidies through state contracts, accept subsidy vouchers from families, or receive state aid such as through a stipend in the form of services, materials, and technical assistance (e.g. Tiered QRIS Implementation Program). Our plan focuses on meeting the needs of our families throughout the state to participate in a high quality early

learning system, as well as to maintain and improve the supply of high quality options in areas with high concentrations of children with high needs. More specifically, the new requirements for mandatory participation in the tiered QRIS through the state subsidies system (August 2012) and UPK programs (required to serve low-income children) are sound strategies for reaching this goal.

The very nature of the tiered QRIS is designed to complement the state subsidies system and ensure high needs children are placed in high quality programs. To begin with, programs in the first level have achieved entry-level high quality by meeting the state's rigorous licensing requirements. These programs will not only be available to high needs children but be on a path for improved quality as part of the tiered QRIS. As part of the validation study, the state plans to address mapping supply by quality level, geography and the demographics of children. (See B(5)).

Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) work closely with EEC to help families find safe, affordable, high quality early childhood education and care. They help families apply for financial assistance, support a centralized waiting list, provide information about the different types of early childhood education and care, and help families find an early childhood education provider in their area. Over the coming years they will play an increasing role in helping families and providers understand the components and utility of the tiered QRIS.

(B)(2)(c) See above.

Performance Measures for (B)(2)(c): Increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Num ber of prog rams in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target- end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
State-funded preschool	216	192	89%	216	100%	216	100%	216	100%	216	100%

Performance Measures for (B)(2)(c): Increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Num ber of prog rams in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target -end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<i>Specify: UPK</i>											
Inclusive Early Learning Environments	164	25	15%	50	30%	164	100%	164	100%	164	100%
Early Head Start and Head Start ⁶¹	221	112	51%	145	66%	221	100%	221	100%	221	100%
Programs funded by IDEA, Part C	59	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619	508	29	6%	102	20%	229	45%	356	70%	508	100%
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	170	18	11%	34	20%	56	33%	112	66%	128	75%
Programs receiving from CCDF funds	8406	1088	26%	8406	100%	8406	100%	8406	100%	8406	100%
Other <i>Describe: Non licensed programs participating in QRIS and license exempt</i>	75	25	33%	26	35%	27	40%	33	45%	37	50%
<i>Other- we don't collect information on non licensed programs so we know how many are participating in QRIS but we don't know how many are out there in total.</i> <i>State funded Preschool- there is nothing in this box because all UPK programs are included in programs receiving CCDF funds (this was a requirement of UPK)</i> <i>Data source: Data extract 8/24/11. Children placed on 8/1/2011.</i>											

⁶¹ Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

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

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

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

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

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

(B)(3)(a) EEC has developed and implemented a system for rating and monitoring the quality of early learning and development programs participating in tiered QRIS that focuses on reliable monitoring at appropriate frequency intervals.

Measuring classroom/group environment. Level 1 measurement consists of a license in good standing, document submission, and verification in the workforce registry. At Level 2, 3, and 4 all programs are required to complete the appropriate Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) tool for each classroom/group setting once for each level before advancing. At Level 2 the program completes the ERS as a self-assessment, which must be conducted within 12 months of the tiered QRIS submission date. Educators receive real-time feedback immediately upon submitting their self-assessments online to EEC (i.e. to move to the next level you must meet X standards). At Level 3 and 4 a reliable outside evaluator completes the ERS. To ensure consistency among the measurement tools used across the system, the Environment Rating Scales used include:

- *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition (ITERS-R)* is designed to assess center-based early learning and development programs for infants and toddlers up to 30 months of age. (Available in Spanish.)

- *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition (ECERS-R)* is designed to assess group programs for children of preschool through kindergarten age, 21/2 through 5. (Available in Spanish).
- *Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition (FCCERS-R)* is designed to assess family child care programs conducted in a provider's home for children from infancy through school-age. (Available in Spanish).
- *The School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS)* is a scale designed to assess group-care programs for children of school age, 5 to 12. It contains full instructions for using the scale, a training guide, and notes clarifying selected items included.

Measuring process and structural quality indicators. At Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4 to effectively measure additional process quality indicators (teacher-child interactions) and structural quality indicators (program administration and leadership), all programs are required to use the following tools depending on the program type. Level 2 programs complete a self-assessment and Level 3 and above programs are required to use an outside reliable rater (see above for state's reliable rater plan). Programs are required to conduct the assessment, using the appropriate tools described below, once for each level before advancing.

- *Program Administration Scale (PAS)* is a reliable and easy to administer tool designed to assess quality in ten areas: human resources development, personnel cost and allocation, center operations, child assessment, fiscal management, program planning and evaluation, family partnerships, marketing and public relations, technology, and staff qualifications. (Center- and School-based);

or

Business Administration Scale (BAS) is a reliable tool for measuring the overall quality of business and professional practices in family child care settings. When used with FCCERS-R these instruments provide a comprehensive picture of the quality of the family child care learning environment and the business practices that support the program. (Family Childcare);

or

The Assessing Afterschool Program Practices Tool (APT) is designed for programs serving children from kindergarten through middle school. It includes two tools 1) the APT Observation Tool (APT O) which focuses on observable program practices; and the 2) APT Program Questionnaire (APT Q), is a self-assessment tool which examines other aspects of program quality such as program planning and connections with schools and parents.

- *The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)* is a tool for observing and assessing the qualities of interactions among teachers and children in classrooms. It measures the emotional, organizational, and instructional supports provided by teachers that are known from research to contribute to children's social development and academic achievement; or
Arnett Caregiver Interaction Scale (Arnett-CIS) to assess teacher/child interactions. The 26-item Arnett-Caregiver Interaction Scale can be used without modification in both center and home-based settings. The items measure the emotional tone, discipline style, and responsiveness of the caregiver in the classroom. (Available for download from EEC's website)
- *Strengthening Families Self-Assessment tool* offers tools to help programs make small but significant changes in their day-to-day practice to build Protective Factors with families. (For all programs at Level 2).

Monitoring and Training Process. EEC manages the monitoring and training process for the tiered QRIS levels and plans to formalize and expand the system by bringing it in-house by 2014. Meanwhile, EEC already has initiated trainings for over 50 individuals. Also, EEC plans to develop and consolidate the training process with guidelines and training methods, which ensure trained monitors' ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability. EEC will contract with providers to develop and deliver trainings, also offered as online courses, to educators, program leaders, and executive directors to complete the self-assessments as well as to become reliable external monitors. The state plans to include this service for reliable raters within its regional offices. The trainings will be facilitated by the 6 pre-existing EPS Grant

Recipients (See (D)(2)) and the trainings will be available to the programs participating through the Tiered QRIS Implementation Program (See (B)(2)).

(B)(3)(b) Massachusetts plans to make the programs' quality rating, licensing, program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations, which is currently available) publicly available to parents with children enrolled in the programs. Upon launching the tiered QRIS in 2011, EEC decided that it would not make the early learning and development programs' information public until the tiered QRIS's validity could be established. Once the validation of the tiered QRIS is completed, EEC will unroll its plan for further engaging parents through user-friendly public access to the information. Section (B)(5) addresses the state's validation plan. Beginning in 2014, EEC plans to develop a sophisticated communication and community engagement strategy to share information about program quality ratings and licensing with families online, which will be fully implemented by 2015.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(B)(4) Promoting access to high quality early learning and development programs for High Needs Children

(B)(4)(c) (1) The state’s ambitious yet achievable goal is to increase the number of early learning and development programs rated in the top tiers (e.g. Level 3 or 4) on the tiered QRIS by 20% each year of the grant. (See Table (B)(4)(c)(1)).⁶² **(2)** The state’s ambitious yet achievable goal is to increase the number of high needs children who are enrolled in programs rated in the top tiers (e.g. Level 3 or 4) on the tiered QRIS by 20% each year of the *Tiered QRIS Implementation Program* stipends. (Table (B)(4)(c)(2)). The state will use its contract subsidies and voucher agreements with programs to scale in increasing requirements for quality each year—at least Level 1 by 2013, at least Level 2 by 2014 and the ultimate goal of 50% at Level 3 or 4 by 2015.

(B)(4)(a) Massachusetts promotes access to high quality early learning and development programs for children with high needs and plans to increase access through its high quality plan. The state’s effective policies and practices, which provide support for early learning and development programs serving high needs children to continuously improve, are the subsidized programs, Tiered QRIS Improvement Program ((B)(2)), EEC Partnership with Together for Quality (T4Q), EPS Grants and Readiness Centers ((A)(1) & (A)(2)), and state-driven professional development ((D)(2)).

In addition, as part of the RTT-ELC, the state signed MOUs with agencies providing services to high needs children to encourage greater program participation in the tiered QRIS. Also, the state plans to continue to develop and promote the state’s online registration and application review system, designed to provide technical assistance to programs.

Programs receiving contract subsidies and vouchers to serve high needs children are required to participate in the tiered QRIS, which places them on a path to continuously improve and advance in quality through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives. Additionally, the state has required these programs to meet Level 2 standards in the tiered QRIS. Programs receiving state aid through the Tiered QRIS Implementation Program are required to participate

62 (See Table (B)(4)(c)(1)) - the states baseline total number of programs covered by the Tiered QRIS is 1,345, with 1,230 in Tier 1; 85 in Tier 2; 20 in Tier 3; and 10 in Tier 4.

in the tiered QRIS and placed on a path to continuously improve and advance in quality. All of the 926 programs that applied to FY11 Tiered QRIS Program Improvement Grants (converted to Tiered QRIS Implementation Program) were required to take 16 hours of training on the tiered QRIS. Also, the Tiered QRIS Implementation Program emphasizes giving supports in the form of services, materials, and trainings to programs serving high needs children.

The state and other providers offer professional development services that support both individual educators on a career advancement pathway and programs' efforts to attain higher levels of quality through the tiered QRIS. (See (D)(2)). As introduced in (A)(1) and (A)(2), the six EPS grant recipients, focus on early education; and Readiness Centers focus on birth-20; both support early learning and development programs located in their region access effective professional development geared to continuous improvement and advancement through the tiered QRIS. (See (D)(2) for details).

By 2015, the state plans, through public-private partnerships, to develop and provide online professional development on tiered QRIS in the following areas:

- Training in each of the core areas of standards in the tiered QRIS through the development of online courses in multiple languages, including but not limited to Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Haitian Creole for each area including curriculum and learning; safe, healthy indoor and outdoor environments; workforce qualifications and professional development; family and community engagement; leadership, management and administration over the first two years of the grant. (These will support online overview courses, which have already been developed.)
- Training reliable monitors to conduct the tiered QRIS external and self-assessment monitoring each year of the grant and integrating the training process into EEC regional offices by July 2013.

For example, EEC, in collaboration with United Way of MassBay, and Wheelock College are developing a Tiered QRIS Overview as an online course available to all early education and out of school time educators as an introduction to participating in the tiered QRIS. The 12-hour (1.2

CEU) online course will be translated into three languages (Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian) to enhance entry phase supports. The first two-hour module of the course will introduce the tiered QRIS and explore the current science of brain development. The next four modules will introduce the five categories of the tiered QRIS standards and the tools that measure process and structural quality indicators. The final module will cover how to apply this knowledge to an early education or out of school time program focusing on leadership, supervision and community engagement.

As a result of the overview course, participants explore the key components of quality (standards, corresponding sub-categories and criteria contained within) that form the tiered QRIS, the tools that measure process and structural quality indicators, and the research basis for the science of brain development supporting the effectiveness factors of early childhood program quality. Participants will learn about the tiered QRIS standards for at least one program type. Participants can participate in a structured field experience (observation) and apply knowledge of the QRIS standards in *communities of learning*, for college credit or through self-study in one or more of the five core standard areas based on the program self-assessment. Participants will identify areas for program improvement and movement towards the next level of the tiered QRIS for an early education or out of school time program.

(B)(4)(b) Massachusetts understands that in order to increase the number of children with high needs enrolled in high quality early learning and development programs, working families need support from the state.⁶³ First, the Commonwealth is using the tiered QRIS to ensure children with high needs are enrolled in high quality early learning and development programs by requiring tiered QRIS participation from all programs receiving state subsidies for serving high needs children. (See (B)(2)). By participating in tiered QRIS, programs not only must meet a threshold of high quality but also receive support to advance in excellence up the levels. Second,

⁶³ EEC has taken considerable steps to increase its efforts to raise awareness about the Tiered QRIS among families, the community and early learning and development programs. The EEC Commissioner and representatives from the advisory committee which focus on high need populations such as homeless, teen parents, low-income families, etc. held numerous public meetings in each region around the Tiered QRIS, in addition to separate EEC Tiered QRIS informational sessions led by EEC Educational Specialists. The public meetings included 200+ participants in each of the six regions, and smaller meetings with ECC support groups, community agencies and other groups. EPS Grantees also have recently been trained to offer these informational sessions in their regions this year as well.

the state's subsidies and vouchers directly support high needs families' placement of their children in high quality programs because all programs which accept subsidies and vouchers are required to participate in the tiered QRIS.

Third, the tiered QRIS *Strengthening Families* framework is another family engagement strategy which provides an outline to programs for incorporating engagement of families with high needs children and is included as a training topic (in tiered QRIS courses) for Directors, Teachers, Family Child Care Providers and Assistants. Starting at Level 2, programs and providers must use the *Strengthening Families* self-assessment tool, an integrated effort aligned with DCF, CTF and DPH (See (B)(3)) to help programs make small but significant changes to their day to day practice to build protective family factors, which include methods to create social connections, resiliency, meeting concrete needs, understanding growth and development and social emotional development of the child. Additionally the tiered QRIS standard *Family and Community Engagement* guides programs in connecting families to resources, including adult education and job training and to assistance around children's development, early literacy, math and approaches to learning. (See (B)(1)). The state, through a partnership with the Community Action Agencies, has developed a financial awareness curriculum to meet the needs of educators, families and children.

Fourth, EEC plans to develop a sophisticated communication and community engagement strategy to share information of program quality ratings and licensing with families by 2015. Families seeking programs for their children benefit from information on the relative quality of potential choices, which, prior to tiered QRIS, was unavailable. Families are best served if quality rating information is easy to access, understand and use – and when the state's tiered QRIS contains all program types (including programs like HS/EHS). However, once the tiered QRIS is validated, EEC plans to create a publicly available user-friendly portal online providing quality rating and licensing information, quality rating data, information, and licensing history (building on currently available health and safety violations and revised descriptions of early education quality) to parents with children enrolled in early learning and development programs.

Fifth, EEC plans to enter tiered QRIS information into the early childhood integrated data system (ECIS) (See C), which helps state agencies that provide other services to children track them horizontally across participating state agencies and federally and state funded programs like Head Start. ECIS is designed to get parent consent to information on children across agencies. Once EEC has parental consent, EEC can target outreach to families regarding the tiered QRIS or other resources to support child development. In addition, the tiered QRIS is linked to the Professional Quality Registry ((D)(2)).

(B)(4)(c) see above.

Performance Measure for (B)(4)(c)(1): Increasing the number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.					
	Baseline (Today)	Target- end of calendar year 2012	Target- end of calendar year 2013	Target- end of calendar year 2014	Target- end of calendar year 2015
Total number of programs covered by the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	1345	8187	8647	8647	8647
Number of programs in Tier 1	1111	222	722	922	1022
Number of programs in Tier 2	86	4	9	17	43
Number of programs in Tier 3	84	1	2	3	5
Number of programs in Tier 4	9	1	2	3	4
<i>Number of programs in Tier 1 include non licensed programs as well as licensed programs. Some programs have more than one applications in different tiers. That's why the count of programs by tiers is 115, but distinct count of programs is 111</i>					

Performance Measures for (B)(4)(c)(2): Increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of Children with High Needs served by programs in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percent of Children with High Needs Participating in Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target-end of calendar year 2012		Target - end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
State-funded preschool <i>Specify: Universal Preschool Program</i>	6193 (preschool children only)	16424 (4308 preschool children)	89% (70 %)	18453 6193 (preschool children)	100% (100 %)	18453 6193 (preschool children)	100% (100 %)	18453 6193 (preschool children)	100% (100 %)	18453 6193 (preschool children)	100% (100 %)
Inclusive Early Learning Environments	6002	2911	48.5 %	3301	55%	1892	65%	4501	75%	6002	100%
Early Head Start and Head Start ⁶⁴	16,540 (this is from PIR data 2010-2011)	9614	58%	10751	65%	12405	75%	14059	85%	16540	100%
Early Learning and Development Programs funded by IDEA, Part C	15162	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Early Learning and Development Programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619	14882	2045	13%	3721	25%	7441	50%	11162	75%	14882	100%
Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	11852	662	4%	2963	25%	5926	50%	8889	75%	11852	100%
Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program	14,846	13153	89%	14846	100%	14846	100%	14846	100%	14846	100%
Other <i>Describe: Non Licensed</i>	Not available										

⁶⁴ Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

Performance Measures for (B)(4)(c)(2): Increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of Children with High Needs served by programs in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percent of Children with High Needs Participating in Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target-end of calendar year 2012		Target - end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<i>programs</i>											
<i>Other- The number of children in the non-licensed programs is not known</i> <i>State funded preschool programs may also serve infants and toddlers. Since the QRIS is whole program based, the number of children targeted is higher than the number of children serviced in the UPK state preschool program. Numbers are also provided for preschool only children.</i>											

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

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

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

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

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

The goals and potential benefits of the tiered QRIS are numerous and affect a variety of stakeholders. For example, once validated and at scale, the tiered QRIS will allow parents to

access information about the quality of early care and education programs, helping them select the best program for their children. The tiered QRIS will also allow programs and providers to use one streamlined set of standards that are connected to supports and fiscal incentives to help them meet and maintain the standards. Lastly, it will allow policymakers to understand where and how to invest additional resources. Of course, none of these goals is possible to meet without ensuring that the tiered QRIS is a valid method to measure and categorize programs by level of quality. Indeed, without understanding the characteristics of the tiered QRIS, its components, and how the information in it can best be utilized, its use is limited and even potentially misleading. In order to validate the effectiveness of the tiered QRIS, EEC is designing and implementing evaluations in collaboration with an independent evaluator, the University of Massachusetts' Donahue Institute.

EEC places a strong emphasis on the need to collect and analyze information in a systematic and empirically sophisticated way, in order to provide feedback about state practices and initiatives that affect our youngest citizens. In that spirit, the state intends to engage an external research organization to carry out the study proposed below.

In designing a comprehensive validation study, Massachusetts looked to several pioneering states, which have undertaken validation studies of their respective tiered Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (tiered QRIS). In particular, Colorado and Missouri were examined closely to capitalize on their strengths and avoid their pitfalls. These two states also examined the association between tiered QRIS and child outcomes, which few other states have done. This is a critical component of the Massachusetts study design. In addition to examining child outcomes, the proposed research plan focuses on examining the tiered QRIS with respect to: child need and risk factors, understanding the characteristics of the components that make up the system, ensuring there is breadth and depth in and between the tiered QRIS levels, and improving quality. Research questions to be addressed by the study include:

Understanding the MA QRIS Self Assessment Process:

1. How accurate are programs in self-assessing their tiered QRIS level? When inaccurate, what factors are contributing to the inaccuracy?

Understanding Child Need:

2. What is the association between child need/risk and program level? Are high needs children more likely to be in a particular program level?

Understanding Tiered QRIS Components:

3. What are the characteristics of the tiered QRIS components as measures? How closely related are the five tiered QRIS component measures?

Understanding Differences in Program Levels:

4. Are program quality levels associated with measures of process-quality? Are there meaningful differences between each level?

Understanding Child Outcomes:

5. Is there an association among program level, the individual tiered QRIS components, and concurrent child outcomes?
6. Is program quality related to future child outcomes? Which tiered QRIS components contribute most to child outcomes?
7. Are there subgroups of children for whom the links between measures of child-care quality and child outcomes are stronger? Does a child's level, or pattern, of risk moderate the association between program quality and child outcomes?

Understanding the Role of Tiered QRIS in Quality Improvement:

8. How will early childhood education and care quality improve over time?

Sampling

Currently, tiered QRIS is a partially voluntary program with only 15% to 20% of all licensed programs in the states participating. There is reason to believe programs that are required to participate vary significantly in quality from programs that are not required to participate. Therefore, our sampling methodology will target both participating and non-participating programs. In keeping with other states' sample sizes, we estimate including between 100 and 200 programs in the overall sample.

A random sample of tiered QRIS participants will be identified and will represent current participants in the tiered QRIS proportionally with regard to program type (i.e., center-based v. home-based), rating level, type of community (urban, rural, suburban) and geographic location within the state. Utilizing the state's EEC provider database, a parallel process will be conducted

to select non-participating programs. The sample of non-participating programs will proportionally represent the state's licensed program population with regard to program type and geographic location. Because tiered QRIS participants over-represent programs that serve high-needs children, there is no need to over-sample in high-poverty cities and towns in order to ensure programs that serve high-needs children are well represented in the overall sample.

Part A: Validating Tiers

Self-Assessments. The tiered QRIS relies on participant self-assessment of quality, with the plan being to externally validate these self-assessments at Levels 3 and 4 as the tiered QRIS goes further to scale. To date, however, no self-assessments have yet been validated. As such, the first step in the validation process is to validate the self-assessment process by “auditing” programs in the sample that currently participate in the tiered QRIS. An external evaluator will assess each participating program and compare the externally derived tiered QRIS level to that assessed by the program itself. In the event of disagreement, subsequent steps in the validation process will proceed with the externally assessed tiered QRIS level. Non-participating programs in the sample will also be assessed and assigned a tiered QRIS level. At the completion of this first step, all programs in the sample – whether they currently participate in the tiered QRIS or not – will have a tiered QRIS level designation and no further differentiation between these two sub-samples will be made until data are analyzed.

Understanding Inaccuracies. Programs that are found to be inaccurately self-assessed will be identified. The reasons for inaccuracy will be explored qualitatively with program directors, which engage in the self-assessment process. This information will be compiled categorically and used to identify necessary supports in order to ensure that future self-assessed QRIS levels are accurate reflections of program quality.

Validating Tiers. Once all programs have been designated a valid tiered QRIS level, program level will be compared with an outside measure, or measures, of program quality. The state will work with the evaluation team to identify an appropriate, valid, and reliable measure(s) to utilize for this purpose. Importantly, measures will not be utilized if their scores are in any way already associated with tiered QRIS level designation. The measure(s) selected will address all

components in the tiered QRIS to allow for a valid comparison between program quality and tiered QRIS level. It is hypothesized that increases in program level will be associated with incremental increases in program quality. Additionally, each component of the tiered QRIS will be compared to the external measure of program quality in order to understand component characteristics (e.g., how they are associated with each other). These steps will help answer Research Questions 1 through 3.

Part B: Changes in Program Quality and Related Outcomes

The evaluation plan below includes examining the association between program quality (i.e., tiered QRIS level) and child outcomes in two waves. At baseline, we will examine whether program quality is related to concurrent child progress, development, and learning outcomes. At follow-up, we will be able to compare from baseline and understand how changes in program level (i.e., improving program quality) facilitate child progress, how program level is related to child outcomes over time, and whether these patterns differ based on child demographics, level of need, and risk factors. The steps described below will help answer Research Questions 4 through 7.

Data Types. A variety of data sources will be utilized to answer the questions posed. To understand how program quality is related to child outcomes, the child data utilized need to tap into various aspects of child development and context, and come from a variety of sources. For these purposes, data utilized will come from programs, teachers, and parents and assess the following domains:

- Child demographics: These include variables such as age, race/ethnicity, and gender.
- Child developmental progress and learning outcomes: A number of criterion measures are currently utilized in state programs to assess children's abilities, progress, and learning. Given that the state has already spent time and effort in identifying and evaluating the quality of the measures used, we will continue to use these in order to minimize confusion and not duplicate efforts. In addition to three measures of executive function, these assessments include: The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), the Woodcock-Johnson, and the Expressive Vocabulary Test (EVT).

- Kindergarten Readiness: Although the state does not currently have a universal measure of Kindergarten Readiness, such a measure is in progress and will be in place by 2013 with full implementation by 2015. (See (E)(1)). As one of the key indicators of program quality is ensuring children enter elementary school ready to learn, we plan to incorporate analysis of the state's measure of Kindergarten Readiness as soon as it is developed and tested.

Data Sources. Programs in the tiered QRIS are required to collect formative data on children. To the extent that these data have been collected, are available, and are relatively recent, they will be utilized. Data will also be collected from teachers and families. In addition to these sources, we will make use of the state's Early Childhood Information System (ECIS) when it is available. When fully implemented, the ECIS will include data from the state's Departments of: Early Education and Care, Elementary and Secondary Education, Revenue, Public Health, Children and Families, Transitional Assistance, and Housing and Community Development. (See (E)(2)). The ECIS will provide invaluable data on child and family risk, and allow us to examine children's progress over time, even beyond the early childhood years.

Analytical Approach. In broad terms, children's learning outcomes will be compared to program quality (i.e., program tiered QRIS level) while taking into account various demographic, risk, and other family contextual factors. Baseline data will be used to examine whether differences in program level are associated with differences in children's developmental progress and learning outcomes. This cross-sectional analysis will provide a profile of children's development in programs of varying levels, while understanding the contextual factors that are so predictive of children's future academic success. Such a cross-sectional analysis is an important first step, but a limited one.

Nine to twelve months later, follow-up data (except child demographics, which are trait characteristics) will be collected again from the same sources. These data will then be compared to baseline data and utilized to understand 1) child progress longitudinally, with respect to initial (stable) program level; and 2) child progress as program quality improves (i.e., as program level increases). Additionally, we will be able to ascertain whether some groups of children progress at

different rates with respect both to program quality and child contextual factors. When the universal measure of Kindergarten Readiness is in place and adopted by the state, we will subsequently be able to compare program quality to Kindergarten Readiness and understand how the two are related. We would expect children in higher quality programs to score better on such measures, though anticipate that child need and risk is a moderating factor. In other words, it is possible that children with more significant needs and more severe risk will need a program at a different level of quality (e.g., Level 3 or 4 versus Level 1) in order to attain the same level of Kindergarten Readiness than children who do not experience the same level of need and risk.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

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

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

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

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

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

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

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

According to the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Pre-K-3rd Institute and others, achievement gaps and disparities in learning exist even as children enter kindergarten and these gaps continue to widen throughout early elementary school. By third grade, children's academic paths begin to diverge dramatically. There is increasing evidence that the combination of high

quality, intentional instruction based on standards, attention to social and emotional development, measurement of progress through a validated and aligned assessment system, and deep and respectful adult/child relationships and family engagement can make a difference in helping to narrow achievement gaps—and provide children with a solid foundation for lifelong learning. When these crucial efforts are connected and aligned to create continuity between early care and education and elementary schools, the gains may be even greater.

The recognition that birth to 5 interventions are key to later academic success has guided our state's effort *to prepare all children to succeed in school when they enter kindergarten and usher them through a seamless, rigorous, coordinated system through the completion of college*. We believe this goal of school readiness as a means to close the achievement gap will be realized if we continue working hard to create an aligned system of standards, screening, assessments, professional development and family engagement strategies. Below you will find three high quality plans to do just that.

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

Massachusetts has gone beyond many states in putting in place early learning and development standards for infants and toddler and pre-K through kindergarten—notably by including pre-K in its adoption of the Common Core standards for math and literacy. In total, the state has developed three sets of early childhood standards intended to be used statewide: the ***Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers, Massachusetts Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences***,⁶⁵ and the ***Pre-K Common Core Standards for math and literacy***⁶⁶ (also known as the ***Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks***) (See: Appendix H). According to a July 2010 report by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute on the progress of a national movement toward adoption of Common Core, nationally agreed upon, high quality

65 Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers, Massachusetts Guidelines for Preschool Learning. Retrieved from:

http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=edumodulechunk&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Government&L2=Departments+and+Boards&L3=Department+of+Early+Education+%26+Care&sid=Eoedu&b=terminalcontent&f=EEC_research_planning_20110628_curriculum_learning&csid=Eoedu

66 Pre-K Common Core Standards for math and literacy Retrieved from:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/commoncore/>

educational standards by the states, “...And then there’s Massachusetts. ...the state that has led the nation in achievement gains over the past decade, thanks in large part to its excellent standards - and their serious implementation.”⁶⁷ This helps confirm our view that our inclusion of pre-K in the state’s adoption of the Common Core Standards was a milestone achievement that has been fundamental to the creation of a continuum of standards-based learning for the state’s entire birth to 20 system. It has forced stakeholders—educators, parents, policymakers, the general public—to think more seriously about how we educate 3- and 4-year-olds; it spells out that the foundation for academic success in school begins much earlier than a child’s first day in kindergarten. This work is aligned with our recently developed *Infant and Toddler Guidelines*.

We have strong confidence in our *Infant/Toddler Guidelines*, which are based on pivotal research⁶⁸ on the importance of relationships in shaping the development of very young children. In developing the guidelines in 2010 (with ARRA funds), EEC was insistent that the guidelines meet the following goals:

- Reflect values inherent in a strength-based approach that recognizes families as their child’s first teacher and acknowledges them as experts about their own child;
- Incorporate new research on brain development that demonstrates that responsive care from parents and other caregivers in a child’s first three years of life helps him/her establish healthy patterns for lifelong learning, lays the foundation for emotional development, and helps children develop resiliency to the stresses;
- Recognize relationships as the key factor in development and the learning of infants and toddlers across all developmental domains;
- Communicate the interrelated nature of the domains of development (e.g. infants and toddlers rely on “hands on” learning, often using several senses and methods to create meaning and understanding of their environment);

67 Carmichael, S.B., Martino, G., Porter-Magee, K., Wilson, W.S. (2010). State of the state standards – and the Common Core – in 2010. Thomas B. Fordham Institute.

68 National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. J.P. Shonkoff and D.A. Phillips, Eds. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

- Describe how programs and educators can best support and interact with infants and toddlers (e.g. use the guidelines as a foundation for professional development and examples of ‘Best Practices’);
- Create a continuum of learning by aligning Infant/Toddler Guidelines with the standards in place at the time, the *Guidelines for Preschool Early Learning Experiences* and the state’s *Curriculum Frameworks for Kindergarten*;

The *Guidelines for Preschool Early Learning Experiences* were developed in 2003, before the creation of EEC (2005), to cover all recognized domains of development at the time and are widely used statewide, particularly by public and private preschool programs today. They were developed with input from public school pre-k districts around the state, from three states around the country with high regarded pre-K standards at the time, and leaders from the state’s education community. Meanwhile, when the state adopted the *Pre-K Common Core Standards* (for math and literacy only) in 2010, we conducted crosswalks with the Common Core and the *Guidelines for Preschool Early Learning Experiences* (posted on our website and distributed) to assist in the transition (See: Appendix I).

To demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that the three sets of early childhood standards are used widely and integrated with other early learning programs, we changed our childcare licensing requirements to mandate that programs adhere to the standards; and, our standards have been used as a foundation for our tiered QRIS to guide curriculum and professional development. Our high quality plan for the next phase of our work in this area aims to we make necessary improvements, particularly to better assist English language development for dual and English language learners, and then work to ensure all of our early learning and development programs will use these standards to their fullest potential. In year one EEC will implement two already developed online courses for all three sets of standards and begin the analysis work on both standards alignment and the development of English Language Development (ELD) guidelines (see below). In year two EEC will offer additional professional development tools, such as coaching and mentoring (See: (D)(2); develop the ELD guidelines based on outcomes of the study; implement recommendations of standards alignment study; support implementation of high quality curriculum and make available opportunities to explore intentional individualized teaching and assessment to educators and families as defined by the standards. In year three,

EEC will adopt and integrate ELD standards and begin training. In year four EEC will focus almost exclusively on professional development around the ELD standards and measuring the extent to which full alignment of our three sets of standards has been accomplished, based on assessment results and data traced through our Early Childhood Information System (ECIS).

We plan to make significant progress by:

- 1) Continuing to expand use of the 2011 *Pre-K Common Core Standards* (also known as the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for English / Language Arts and Math*), the *Guidelines for Preschool Early Learning Experiences* and the *Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers* through our professional development activities, family outreach and private sectors partnerships (see below);
- 2) Improving and validating alignment in recognized areas of deficiency (see below), including how our standards can better assist English language learners. We expect to accomplish this by 2013 as described below in (b).
- 3) Providing professional development/training opportunities through recently developed online courses and mentoring (See: (D)(2)) that will enable all early childhood educators to further implement the standards, while also helping them to advance on the tiered QRIS;
- 4) Mapping the state's early learning standards and Head Start performance standards on to our selected evidence-based formative assessments (which will become the basis for the kindergarten entry assessment, and be aligned from birth to kindergarten) (See: (C)(2));
- 5) Better communicating our standards and guidelines to all educators in the Commonwealth, paying particular attention to educators of high need children.
- 6) Better communicating our standards and guidelines to all families in the Commonwealth, paying particular attention to high need children and their families, by using such strategies as outreach through the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grantees and producing reader-friendly publications for parents in multiple languages, among others (See: (C)(4)).

(a)

We have been proactive in trying to ensure that our early learning and development standards recognize diversity and address issues facing children with high needs.⁶⁹ As described in (A)(1), the state has developed its own definition of children with high needs, which explicitly incorporates a child’s cultural, racial, and linguistic status. By working to move beyond more traditional and limited definition of “high need,” we recognize the particular challenges faced by many children who have special needs, who are immigrants or the children of immigrants and/or whose own primary language or the language spoken in their homes is not English. As you will see below, that recognition is reflected in our tools and standards and reflected in our tiered QRIS (See: Section (B))—as is the recognition that, in some areas, we have more work to do. Our primary goal is to support the maintenance of home language and ensure communication with families whose primary language may not be English.

Another sign of our commitment to culturally and linguistically appropriate standards is the sensitivity to children’s home language and culture that manifests itself through many specific references to these issues in the *Infants and Toddlers Guidelines*. For example, the guidelines for early childhood educators:

- Ask the educator to “Promote and support the influence of culture, language, learning style and temperament of each child.”
- State, “Educators must be very conscious of the different goals that families from varying cultures have for their children.”
- State: “A critical consideration in the area of language and literacy development is that children will demonstrate skills in their home language first; consequently, educators are called to honor their diverse heritage, primary language and culture.”
- Include literacy activity recommendations like “tell infant stories, sing songs, and repeat rhymes from infant’s own culture and language.”

69 The WIDA Consortium study on the alignment of the WIDA English Language Development standards and the Common Core found adequate alignment and is now adapting its own standards to better reflect the Common Core. See www.wida.us and type common core alignment study into the search tool.

The 2003 *Guidelines for Preschool Early Learning Experiences* do not, we recognize, reflect current research and appreciation for cultural and linguistic diversity to the extent they should. Below we explore our strong commitment to rectifying this to ensure we are doing everything possible to guide educators in evidence-based practices that will improve English language learners' development and academic success—recognizing this is key to our goal to close the state's expansive achievement gap.

The ***Pre-K Common Core Standards*** (*Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Math and English/Language Arts*) do not suggest as many activities that recognize cultural and linguistic diversity as the infant/toddler standards, but the overarching principles of the pre-K standards clearly underscore the value of understanding cultures and diversity. For example, one guiding principle for the state framework for English (pre-K to 12) is that students “should gain broad exposure to works from the many communities that make up contemporary America as well as from countries and cultures throughout the world.” The frameworks also describe the student who meets the standards as one who comes “to understand other perspectives and cultures.”

To ascertain the degree to which our standards are culturally and linguistically appropriate and cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness (as specifically listed in the RTT-ELC grant application), the state recently hired American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct a preliminary analysis to help us specifically answer this question (See Appendix J), and to suggest what would be needed to do to improve them. The analysis determined that there was a “considerable degree of alignment” but challenges remain to be addressed. (See Appendix K for crosswalk of the standards.) Among the challenges cited was “lack of alignment about the use of standards for children who are dual language/English language learners.” AIR recommended that the state should do more to “... articulate whether and how the standards should be used in relation to dual language / English language learners ...” The recommendations went on to state, “It is important that there are clearly articulated procedures for ensuring that the standards are used appropriately for all children.”

This report acknowledged what we suspected—that more needs to be done to ensure our English language learners' needs are addressed through our standards. Thus, EEC has included in this

proposal funds to embark on a process that will ultimately lead to the adoption of **English Language Development (ELD) Guidelines** for use by early childhood educators. The guidelines will be based on a child's individual progress toward English language proficiency, not their age, by including early, middle, and late stage development tiers for proficiency. To do this, the state will hire an institution of higher education (IHE) or other entity to review the state of California's highly regarded guidelines for English language development and recommend ways to integrate a defined set of ELD guidelines that can be integrated with our three sets of standards, paying closest attention to the *Guidelines for Pre-K Early Learning Experiences*, which we know are most outdated and deficient.

In addition to focusing on cultural and linguistic appropriateness, the preliminary AIR analysis recommended that we:

- Focus on alignment in the areas of social and emotional development, approaches to learning, and physical development, especially for pre-K through early elementary years.
- Further review standards in their ability to identify not only what children need to know and be able to do, but how children's skills should develop over time.
- Use a consistent definition of age across the standards, including both years and months.
- Examine how the standards are aligned to 3-year-olds and younger 4-year-olds (e.g., children between 36 and about 52 months).

As you will read below, these findings and recommendations have been important in spotting shortcoming that we will address by continuing our efforts to create meaningful, developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate standards across our pre-K system.

(b)

Two independent organizations examined our standards' alignment with literacy and mathematics and found no glaring misalignment or deficiencies. The AIR preliminary analysis found that there was strong alignment for literacy and mathematics across all standards and age groups. And prior to the state's adoption of the *Pre-K Common Core Standards*, a study conducted by WestEd compared Massachusetts' standards and the Common Core and found no significant differences – that there was more in common than not between Massachusetts

academic standards and the Common Core; both standards were high but the Common Core overall were higher. (See: Appendix L). The non-ideological review of the state's standards and Common Core provided a factual and unbiased analysis as to whether adoption of Common Core would build on the successes of the Commonwealth's education reform and investment.⁷⁰ The review found that there were many areas where the Common Core strengthened Massachusetts' standards and would better prepare our children to succeed in college and the workforce.

Based on these studies, we are reasonably confident that our early learning and development standards are well aligned with our early literacy and mathematics standards. Still, we plan to take further steps to validate the degree of alignment for literacy and math standards, in addition to further understanding how to improve our standards' appropriateness to cultural, linguistic, and developmental and all Essential Domains of Readiness.

In addition to hiring a vendor to examine the development of English Language Development Standards, as mentioned above, the next phase of our plan also calls for engaging an IHE to conduct a two-part, more in-depth study of our standards that will expand on the preliminary analysis conducted by AIR and WestEd in terms of both depth and breadth. The IHE will 1) determine the degree of alignment within the state's *Infant/Toddler Guidelines*, *Guidelines for Pre-K Early Learning Experiences*, the *Pre-K Common Core*, and the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework*; and 2) determine the degree of alignment between the state standards and the three approved formative assessment tools (Work Sampling System, Teaching Strategies-GOLD, and High Scope COR) (See: (C)(2)). The IHE will make recommendations to the EEC board on steps to improve our alignment.

So we feel confident in the overall alignment of our math and literacy standards (particularly with the development of the crosswalk to explain that trajectory). And we believe that upon completion of this study, and the review of California and other best practices for ELD guidelines, we expect to have a thorough understanding of our level of alignment across the standards themselves, areas to improve upon, and a solid foundation from which to train educators and families on their importance and use. We believe that a process to verify and

⁷⁰ Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education/WestEd. (2010). Statewide business group recommends adoption of common core educational standards.

improve that our early learning standards complement our state's strong reputation for developing and integrating strong K-12 academic standards, we will enhance confidence in our entire education system. Standards translated into practice are the core of a quality education; they form the basis for an assessment system, professional development, and ultimately, what happens in the classroom or between a child and a parent.

(c)

As part of the state's recent re-procurement process in 2009, all early learning and development programs must adhere to the state standards in order to receive a contract for state subsidies. At the same time, the state began a phased-in requirement for programs to participate in tiered QRIS (See: Sec. (B)), with all subsidized programs required to be in the system by FY13. Also, to qualify for a Universal Pre-Kindergarten grant, programs must adhere to six required criteria, including adherence to either or both sets of standards. Similarly, the state recently revised our licensing standards for nearly 12,000 early education and care programs statewide, including after-school programs, group child care centers and family child care homes. The new requirements were designed to move beyond basic health and safety standards to standards that focus on children's growth and development. Licensing requirements now require programs to adhere to the standards. Our next phase on the programmatic implementation of our standards is expanding access to specific, targeted training on the use and integration of the standards (see below).

When EEC was created, it was required to establish **Workforce Core Competencies**, which would align core teaching competencies with program quality standards. EEC established rigorous and inclusive guidelines for developing the competencies and relating them to standards and regulations. While Massachusetts is among several states that have developed and implemented workforce core competencies for early childhood education, the state is unique in having created a single set of core competencies for all types of care. Our competencies apply to child care centers, out-of-school time programs, family child care homes, public preschool programs, private schools, preschool and kindergarten programs, and Head Start programs. The

competencies also cover educators working with all children and youth, including infants and toddlers⁷¹.

EEC also has worked closely with the Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education and Higher Education to examine how the new standards are integrated with teacher preparation programs to ensure our future workforce is able to use those standards in center-based early learning environments.⁷² The state now requires all sponsored or contracted professional development activities to include, focus on, or align with the standards. One example of the state's commitment to this approach is the *State Curriculum Standards Alignment* trainings, which have taken place in six different regions of our state). (See: (D)(2) for more examples of standards-related professional development activities).

In an important sign of our concern that early learning and development standards are aligned with curricula and educational activities, we are working with a variety of private sector partners to ensure that their material, programmatic activities and outreach efforts reflect our standards. For example, we are requiring that all materials produced through our new media partnership with WGBH, Boston's public television station (see (C)(4) and Appendix M), adequately reflect and support our state's standards for both infants and toddlers and pre-K. And the Boston Children's Museum, (See: LL) has agreed to incorporate our standards into their activities, such as School Readiness Friday Nights and permanent exhibits. We expect these programs to be particularly useful in targeting young children and families who attend informal childcare settings (See more in (C)(4)).

As discussed in (C)(2), the state also has completed planning for the development and completion of an aligned, truly comprehensive assessment system based on the standards with a focus on formative assessments.

(d)

⁷¹ Massachusetts Workforce Core Competencies.
http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/prof_devel/core_comp_packet.pdf

⁷² Massachusetts State Advisory Council (2010). 2010 strategic report. Retrieved from
http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/board_materials/20100406_sac.pdf.

Massachusetts has a solid foundation of tested professional development supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to our new standards among educators, families and the broader public. From the outset, we took an approach that raised awareness and cultivated public ownership of the standards. Before instituting the *Infant/Toddler Guidelines* and the *Pre-K Common Core Standards*, the state engaged in a public planning process with early learning educators, advocates, higher education experts and families through a series of community forums and online websites. When EEC initiated the pilot of its tiered QRIS last year, the standards drove the system design. As part of its implementation, EEC reaches out to educators to promote understanding of and commitment to the standards in a variety of ways.

Mostly, we use—and will continue to use—the state’s two primary capacity-building vehicles to continue to enhance knowledge and effective use of our standards. Given our recent adoption of the *Infant/Toddler Standards* and *Pre-K Common Core*—and the expected revisions to the *Guidelines for Preschool Early Learning Experiences* and creation of ELD guidelines—our reliance on these vehicles will be particularly vital. Our six regional **Educator Provider Support (EPS)** grantees and the **Readiness Centers** serve as hubs for professional development and are the main access points through which early learning educators receive information about the whole education system and specifically the standards. The Readiness Centers (based at IHEs) serve as the linkage between pre-K EPS grantees and K-12 professional development activities to improve alignment. (See more on each in (D)(2)). Under this RTT-ELC proposal, these centers will reach their full potential to promote understanding of both current standards and the new ones that will be phased in. As part of the plan, EPS grantee organizations will offer clear, practical professional development trainings focused on how to embed the standards into curricula, classroom activities, and tiered QRIS efforts; how to link them to assessments and provide segmented strategies for English language learners and special needs students. The Readiness Centers will continue to focus on alignment and serve as forums for convening discussions and training on these efforts.

The state also has developed an online, continuing education unit and a credit-bearing course to introduce the standards to the early childhood education field that will be delivered by both **EPS grantees and Readiness Centers**. The online course is designed to increase access to teaching

for early educators. In addition, the online tools will help program instructional leaders support staff development or peer groups in integrating the infant/toddler and preschool guidelines into practice and to assist them to move up tiered QRIS levels. The course also provides information on all IHEs offering credit-based courses in curriculum and assessment. Over 40 educators have been trained to support some level of the course, and Westfield State University recently offered to provide credits for those students who choose that career path.

In addition, the WGBH media partnership mentioned above includes the creation of an online digital hub for curriculum for early educators that will be based on the standards, allowing educators one, user-friendly place where they can access standards-based, digital curriculum for direct use in their classroom – or at home with families. (See: (D)(2) and (C)(4)).

A final significant support is a public awareness campaign co-sponsored by EEC and United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley. This public-private partnership aims to raise understanding of the standards and their value to educators and to the public. This fall, the partnership launched *Brain Building in Progress*, a public service announcement television campaign that draws attention to the importance of investing in young children. Plans to expand this campaign are part of the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan** (See: (C)(4)).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Massachusetts has in place the building blocks of a Comprehensive Assessment System that is aligned from birth to grade three and beyond, with a specific goal to reach and improve learning for the approximately 135,000 children with high needs, 30% of children under age six living in the Commonwealth. We have in place a selected set of evidence-based early childhood screening, formative and environmental assessment tools in addition to tools that measure adult-child interaction and a high quality plan that uses those building blocks to finish the job of implementing a strongly aligned system of screening and assessment for children and programs.

The overall goal for this high quality plan is: *to complete the design and implementation of the Massachusetts Early Learning and Development (MELD) Assessment system, which will measure a child from birth to grade three, including a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA), to measure and improve child outcomes.* This will allow us to gather baseline information on children through a series of common, universally used screening and assessment tools at a minimum of two checkpoints between birth and kindergarten entry. Programs serving children from birth to age 5 are expected to use formative assessment to measure growth and learning,

individualize teaching and curriculum design, and communicate with parents on progress and special needs.

The MELD and KEA will flow into the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), which begins for students in grade three.

Apart from our high quality plan around the KEA, which we address in detail in Section (E)(1), we will measure our success toward this goal by having:

- 1) Completed administration of screenings for all 275,000 children in the state's early learning and development settings, prioritizing the 55,761 high needs children who receive state financial assistance and the state's estimated 135,000 high needs children with multiple risk factors. We expect to do this by creating and supporting programs in the tiered QRIS to move to level three. Initially, we will focus on all programs in the tiered QRIS that contract with the state or receive state subsidy to use an evidenced-based formative assessment by the end of year two; this will be one requirement needed to move to level three or higher in the tiered QRIS. In addition, by year three of the RTTT-ELC grant our goal is to ensure that all families who may or may not be engaged in early learning and development programs but receive state services through informal child development programs will receive screening (based on parental consent).
- 2) Validated our formative assessment tools to ensure children's progress toward the standards. We will use norm-referenced assessments to systematically examine the appropriateness, validity, and reliability of using formative assessments to produce a statewide common measure of kindergarten readiness (See: (C)(2)). That is, we will assess the degree to which the *Work Sampling System*, *Teaching Strategies-GOLD*, and *High Scope COR* provide accurate information on children's progression toward achieving critical learning benchmarks as determined by the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (Pre-K Common Core)*. Initially, the norm-referenced tools will be used to evaluate language and receptive vocabulary, early math skills, and executive functioning given the availability and widespread acceptance of norm-referenced assessments in these areas. We will work with leading experts to identify additional tools to measure all remaining essential domains of school readiness. These norm-referenced assessments will not be given to all children in the

Commonwealth, but rather to a sample of sufficient size to provide point-in-time measures on a specific battery of skills that may be used to examine the validity of formative assessments results. We will use sample weights and statistical models to account for all students, including English language learners and students with special needs. To our knowledge, no previous work has been done to validate early learning formative assessment tools using with this degree of rigor.

- 3) Provided access to formative assessment tools at state expense to programs that have attained level three and four in the tiered QRIS, which we estimate to grow from less than 1 percent to 20 percent over the next two years (See (B)). We expect to do this by December 2013.
- 4) Built the capability to share statewide screening and assessment results annually via our ECIS by 2014. We expect to do this by December 2014.
- 5) Completed training of 100% of early childhood educators who work with children who are in state funded informal childcare settings (often home-based care) – trainings administered through the 107 early childhood programs (Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Programs) on how to administer the screening and how to interpret the data in ways that support families’ understanding of their role in growth and development by July 2012.
- 6) Completed training on formative assessment for 800 programs, or approximately 1,200 early educators, in each year of the grant, also a requirement for participation in the tiered QRIS. Priority will be given to those programs serving children with high needs.
- 7) We will develop a screening and assessment module for all programs and educators with regard to appropriate use of screening and assessment for children who are developing English by December 2013.

Our plan addresses state, regional, community and program level efforts in a coordinated, aligned, and supported approach constituting a truly Comprehensive Assessment System.

Roles and Responsibilities within our High Quality Plan

State Level: The state is responsible for the overall design, lay-out and alignment of the comprehensive assessment system, monitoring to make interventions that assure the information is used appropriately by families, programs, the communities and the state. The state also is responsible for the measurement of early education and care environments, adult/child interactions, screening of children in and outside of programs, and the development of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA). Our first responsibility is to support individualized teaching and learning; followed by policy development and allocation of resources.

Regional Level: Our established regional structures, the Readiness Centers and Educator Provider Support (EPS) grantees (See: (A)(3) and (D)(2)) are the lead entities responsible for providing technical assistance and training to support licensed early childhood educators—most of whom serve high needs children—to administer assessments and screening and to utilize data to improve their practice, paying particular attention to children with high needs.

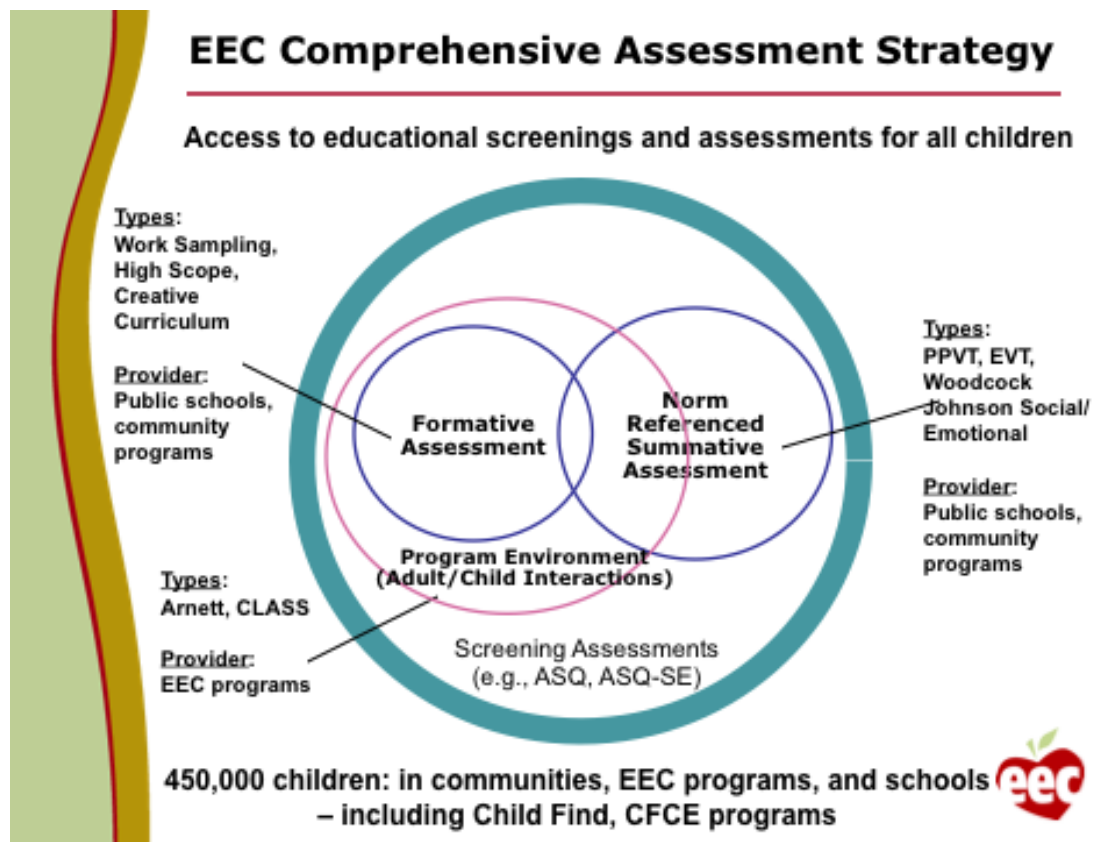
Community Level: Our state's 107 Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grantees are responsible for building capacity at the community level. They create opportunities for universal screening for children who are high needs but not involved in formal early childhood programs. They do this by building partnerships, engaging families in how to support their children with age and developmentally appropriate early learning activities, facilitating access into high quality care environments, administering screening tools, such as the ASQ and ASQ-SE, to assess where children are as a tool for teaching parents about growth and development in multiple domains.

Program Level: High quality individual early learning and development programs that contract with the state are currently requested to screen children within 45 days of entering a program and conduct environmental ratings and measurements of adult-child interaction as a tool within the tiered QRIS at each level. These programs also administer formative assessments to support improvement of the teaching and learning, and screening for early identification and environmental assessments to improve classroom and program practice.

(a)

The Massachusetts Early Learning and Development (MELD) Assessment, together with the state's MCAS, will form an aligned, validated and seamless comprehensive assessment system in Massachusetts. Our early learning assessment system will be comprised of screening, formative assessments, KEA (See: (E)(1)), measures of environmental quality, and measures of the quality of adult-child interaction. Normative assessments will be used only as tool to validate the formative assessment on a sample of children in the state.

Each of these assessments will be reviewed to ensure they are valid and reliable for its specified purpose and for the population with which it will be used. The system is designed to organize information about the process and context of young children's learning and development in order to help early childhood educators make informed instructional and programmatic decisions.



We understand that educators in the classroom and in child care settings offer invaluable input on when and how screening and assessments should be administered and which tools and strategies are most effective with children. We have taken great strides to seek their input. We

conducted an online survey that elicited responses from 259 early childhood educators in the state regarding comprehensive assessment system ideas and improvements and the early planning of a KEA; we gathered feedback via an meetings around the state over the last three years; and we will engage in a statewide listening tour of early education providers, parents, experts in the field and the advocacy community to gain critical feedback on a KEA implementation process.

The online survey (See: Appendix N) offered suggestions that we have implemented in the development of our high quality plan. For instance, one educator suggested, “a program that creates parent demand would increase the likelihood of assessments being done.” This type of feedback has increased our emphasis on our family and public engagement strategies, via our CFCE grantees, home-visiting programs and public awareness campaigns to create multiple points of entry. Another educator suggested combining intensive assessment training with coaching/mentoring, which we decided to implement (See: (D)(2)). As you will see below, based on feedback we also consciously included a degree of flexibility where possible in developing a comprehensive assessment system, with certain metrics yet to be determined.

Our decision to focus so heavily on the formative assessments was very much influenced by at FY 2009 study by Abt Associates, Inc., which conducted an evaluation of the quality in a statewide sample of early childhood settings that serve pre-school children with high needs. The study used the CLASS observation measure to evaluate provider/child interactions in three primary domains (emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support) for licensed center-based programs, Head Start centers, public school programs and family child care providers. Programs in Massachusetts’ Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) and non-UPK programs were included within each program type. A final report found that among all program types, programs scored high in emotional support and classroom organization, but were significantly lower on instructional support. This deficit in instructional support prompted EEC to undertake a process to support the full implementation and utilization of research-based comprehensive child formative assessment to intentionally improve preschool teachers’ individual instruction strategies for working with children.

Screening: The primary screening measures used in Massachusetts are the ASQ and the ASQ-SE (see below). They are used to support parent understanding of growth and development; and serve as an early warning to educators and families (and ultimately, policymakers and other leaders, upon full development of the ECIS) of potential developmental delays in children birth to 5. The validity of the third edition of ASQ has been evaluated extensively, including a research sample that includes 15,138 children that mirror the U.S. population in terms of race, ethnicity, and socio-economic groups.⁷³ These measures are considered age and developmentally appropriate, valid, and reliable instruments used to identify children for follow-up services related to developmental, learning, physical health, behavioral health, oral health, child development, vision and/or hearing. Currently, we cannot measure the number of programs around the state conducting screening at some point prior to kindergarten. Our goal is for all children in the state to be screened, starting with the following population targets:

- 1) Children with High Needs
- 2) Infants and toddlers
- 3) Preschool children
- 4) Kindergarten children (EEC will work with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) to identify which screeners and referrals are currently in use and work with districts to capture the relevant information and track referrals.)

To do this we will provide ASQ/ASQ SE toolkits to the 107 organizations who currently receive our statewide CFCE grants and those children involved in the state's home-visiting program; we will conduct trainings for roughly 70 of the CFCE programs and other programs through agreement with DPH, including the home-visiting programs. These 107 organizations will administer screenings, given their close connections to families. We expect that by 2013, they will be responsible for screening 50% of the birth to 5 population, with whom they come in contact on more than one occasion. Our home-visiting programs will screen 100 percent of children enrolled in the program. In addition, through this grant we will expand a program that provides pediatricians with the tools and training they need to utilize the ASQ/ASQ-SE.

73 Squires, J. Ph.D., Twombly, E. M.S., Bricker, D. Ph.D., & Potter, L. M.S. (2009). ASQ-3 User's Guide Excerpt.

Formative Assessments: The three most commonly used formative assessments used in the Commonwealth are: Work Sampling System, High Scope COR, and Teaching Strategies GOLD. These formative assessments include questions, tools, and processes that are specifically designed to monitor children's progress in meeting the state's standards; considered to be valid and reliable for their intended purposes and their target populations; and are linked directly to the curriculum.

In addition to our work with Abt Associates mentioned earlier, EEC also worked extensively with the Oldham Innovative Research in selecting these tools as a part of implementing the UPK program. EEC's selection was based on a number of criteria; specifically, they were cross-walked with the *Guidelines for Preschool Early Learning Experiences* (See: (C)(1) (infant/toddler guidelines did not exist at that time) and shown to cover all of the developmental domains, and offered an online component.

The Massachusetts Early Learning Plan calls for engaging with an IHE to ensure these formative assessments align with the birth to 5 standards including the *Pre-K Common Core Standards (Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks)* as described in (C)(1) and Appendix I. This will be done by hiring a vendor to validate that the state's three main formative assessments align with state standards and to develop the KEA as described in (E)(1). We will identify specific content within the formative assessments that are significantly associated with child outcomes in language, math and executive functioning through validation with norm-referenced assessments. It is our understanding this will be nationally ground-breaking work that we will instill confidence in our assessments, their use in gauging student progress, and how they can be used for early interventions in the classroom. Norm-referenced assessments will not be given to all children in the Commonwealth, but rather to a sample of sufficient size to provide point-in-time measures on a specific battery of skills that may be linked to formative assessments results. We intend for this to occur in 2013-2014, as soon as we have trained a cadre of educators to use the tools to collect the data.

This validation study will enable us to ensure the use of one of these three types of formative assessments to target individualized learning plans has an impact on certain child growth areas. We expect to publish this work in year two of the grant.

Kindergarten Entry Assessment (See: (E)(1)). Massachusetts has committed to developing a common metric that will be used to develop the KEA. While we discuss this in detail in (E)(1), it's important to recognize the state's development of a KEA as the critical third leg of the birth to 5 comprehensive assessment stool. Our approach to a KEA is grounded in flexibility and local control over teaching and learning. The intention is to provide school districts and schools with appropriate guideposts for assessing children's learning and then use item analysis that is both internally and externally valid. EEC, in partnership with ESE, will contract with appropriate IHE(s) to complete this work.

(b)

Massachusetts believes our comprehensive assessment system will only be as effective as the extent to which programs and their educators understand and buy into why our system tools should be used. Massachusetts is bringing together a number of promising techniques toward this end that have separate but compatible roots; they include outreach to both educators and families about the importance of assessing children's development. Specifically, our state efforts to convey educators' understanding of our assessment tools have been grounded in the *Strengthening Families* framework developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy. The framework has given child care, family support, child welfare, and some pediatric and mental health providers in our state a common language to talk about how we enhance families' confidence and competence in supporting children's healthy development even in times of stress.

In addition, the Brazelton Touchpoints Center, located in Boston, and the new Head Start National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement, are providing deep expertise in working with parents and educators to assess and interpret ASQ and formative assessment data in ways that shift the paradigm from an expert imparting knowledge to the recognition that parents know their children best and are ultimately their most enduring teachers and advocates.

An example of steps Massachusetts took to communicate the purposes and approach of our assessments followed the Abt Associates study - when we began to require all UPK program grantees to use of an evidenced-based formative assessment tool and tied that to the new tiered QRIS, which requires the use of an evidenced-based assessment for individualized instruction and professional development (See: Section (B)). Child observation, assessments of environmental quality, and teacher-child interactions—along with formative assessments of children's learning progress—are measured in each tiered QRIS program type at every level in the tiered QRIS system. (See (B)). In addition, the tiered QRIS identifies trainings that educators must have in observation, assessment and/or developmental screenings at every level in the tiered QRIS in order to advance to the next level. Introductory, intermediate and advanced level trainings are offered.

Finally, as detailed elsewhere in this proposal, Massachusetts has a network of CFCE grantees, which have also been encouraged to understand the use of research-based screening tools. We as a state believe it's simply not good enough to tell educators they should use *x* assessment; it's important for them to know why, because they are the individuals we want to empower to improve classroom instruction that lead to positive child outcomes. We have done this in large part through grantee trainings, which are explored further below in (d).

(c)

Massachusetts' high quality plan for a comprehensive assessment system is to build a seamless, aligned system of universally accepted and understood screening and assessment tools that provide a baseline of data and periodic "check-ins" with *all* children across the Commonwealth until third grade (MCAS) and including kindergarten entry. It's no accident that we are well on our way to accomplishing this, given our unified governance structure and Gov. Patrick's directive to state agencies that they must work collaboratively to ensure all of our state's youngest children are prepared for success in school and beyond toward our ultimate goal of closing the achievement gap.

Perhaps the most important factor in how we align our screening and assessments was taken last year when the state included pre-K standards in its adoption of the *Pre-K Common Core Standards* (See: (C)(1)). Aligning the standards is the most basic foundation for creating a

system of aligned assessments. Secondly, we once again rely on our unified governance structure and inherent collaboration among the state's education agencies (in this case, EEC and ESE) to start by looking at the math and English/Language Arts MCAS first given in grade three, and work backwards to ensure children are prepared for success at that point, using checkpoints along the way (kindergarten entry, formative assessments, screening tools). EEC and ESE are working hand-in-hand to develop the KEA. Thirdly, to be successful, we collectively determined the need to work collaboratively to design an integrated data system that enables the sharing of assessment results—thus, expanding and integrating our use of data-driven decision-making across Massachusetts state agencies.

Specifically, we decided to shine a spotlight on our youngest children, who had not been sufficiently included in the earliest iterations of the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) (See: (E)(2)). A comprehensive data system, if effectively designed and utilized, we determined, will provide an opportunity for state agencies to work together as a type of early warning system for young children with high needs.⁷⁴ In 2011, EEC commissioned an exhaustive study on the design and implementation of Massachusetts **Early Childhood Information System (ECIS)**, which aligns and is interoperable with the **Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SDIS)**. (See more in (E)(2)). The ECIS is anchored in the rapidly expanding neuroscience of early childhood development as revealed in the November 2010 ECIS Institute, co-hosted by EEC and the Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

The state is currently working to lay the groundwork for a longitudinal birth-20 system via the SLDS, with ECIS serving as a portal through which a child's baseline information is entered. We will track a child's participation in social services and education as they progress toward adulthood by assignment of a unique identifier to each child. In 2010 EEC began sending data for student identifier assignment to ESE starting with the teen parent population. Since the project began, 30,069 children have been assigned IDs and 1,992 were found to have prior IDs. We believe that by continuing to assign student identifiers and carrying out our plan described in (E)(2), we will be able to meet our goal to share statewide assessment results annually via our

74 Public Consulting Group. (2011). Early childhood information system (ECIS) vision document. Massachusetts Department of Early Care and Education. (pp.2).

ECIS by 2014. This will also be critical in measuring growth in students prior to the MCAS in grades three and beyond.

(d)

A key component of administering a comprehensive assessment system is training early childhood educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

Our state's existing network of six regional Educator Provider Support (EPS) grantees has served as the key building block of our state's professional development efforts. We will direct training funds to the organizations currently receiving EPS grants (not through the grants themselves) that will expand training opportunities on the effective use of assessments statewide. In terms of content and format design of these trainings, we have many quality examples that we will draw upon to move this plan forward.

The first example is a partnership between Wheelock College and Associated Early Education and Care, which trained approximately 900 early childhood educators at 120 training sessions in FY11. Topics covered included: (1) overview of assessment theory, research and practice; (2) using assessment data to inform program practice and target professional development, assessing children with special needs, using assessment and technology to implement differentiated/individualized teaching and learning strategies for special need and limited English proficiency students; (3) using assessment data to communicate with and engage families and provide anticipatory guidance; and (4) implementation challenges and strategies and aligning assessment practice with curriculum, standards and guidelines. Educators who participated in the introductory and intermediate sessions received continuing education credits and educators taking part in the advanced training track received college credit for their participation. Educators participating in trainings had access to technical assistance and consultation, with approximately 100 of them receiving more intensive coaching and mentoring. Associated Early Education and Care also provided information sessions across the state to help program administrators learn about the tools and select one for use in their program. The estimated demand by each of the assessment tools was as follows:

- 7% Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum

- 84% Teaching Strategies GOLD
- 6% High Scope Child Observation Record (COR)
- 4% Work Sampling

Given our strategy to tie the use of our screening and assessment tools to the tiered QRIS, our training efforts will help educators make this link and ultimately, advance on the tiered QRIS ladder and improve teaching in the classroom. EEC will work with one or more IHEs or partnerships of IHEs to design and coordinate training on assessment and screening tools to programs to support implementation of assessment systems and tiered QRIS measurement tools to support program improvement in settings serving children birth to 13 statewide. The vendor(s) will also coordinate with EPS grantees to ensure locally that programs engaged in tiered QRIS have access to high quality training and are being trained to integrate assessment, screening and use of the measurement tools into their programs and implementation for tiered QRIS. The vendor will develop modules for Environmental Rating Scales, screening and formative assessment tools that support the existing EPS grantees to offer similar training (using a train-the-trainer model) to support sustainability and increased access for all providers.

Through funds to the organizations currently receiving EPS grants or through DPH programs we will meet our goals to 1) training 100% of early childhood educators who work with high needs children not involved in formal programs at 107 early community early childhood programs on how to administer the screening and how to interpret the data with parents; and 2) train 800 programs (approximately 1,200 early educators) in each year of the grant in formative assessment, a requirement for participation in the tiered QRIS. Priority will be given to those programs serving children with high needs.

Other assessment training investments we propose include a combination of small grants to individual early learning and development programs, train-the-trainer workshops, targeted professional development, coaching, and peer mentorship—all of which will help us to rapidly universalize the critical training component, and ultimately, the realization of a fully development and integrated screening and assessment system from birth to preschool to kindergarten to grade three and high school graduation.

(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.

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

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

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

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

(C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.

Massachusetts recognizes that families are the single most influential individuals in a child's development and places strong emphasis on a comprehensive approach to bolster parents and communities as they address children's health, learning, emotional, and developmental needs. With a focus on reaching families of children with high needs, we're taking a variety of approaches to form strong partnerships with families.

Progress and capacity for change are frequently about leadership. The youngest children in Massachusetts have a leader in the Commissioner of EEC who is deeply committed to providing families with information and facilitating their involvement in their children's learning and healthy development. She displayed this commitment by bringing all community grant funding under one Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant, which essentially creates a local hub for families. And, she has changed the culture and approach within EEC and in the field so that children and families are at the center of all planning.

Because of the EEC Commissioner's deep commitment to engaging and supporting families, each new strategy and proposed program is evaluated on its potential impact on children and families. EEC promotes efforts that: consider the whole child, including his/her family and

community; use trusted advisors and peers to help inform and engage families; respect cultural and linguistic differences among families and communities; promote engagement and capacity building; and incorporate feedback loops, continuous learning and improvement. The

Massachusetts Early Learning Plan includes a specific goal for this plan: *to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate support to families, especially families of children with high needs, to promote school readiness*. To achieve this, we have identified three specific objectives:

- 1) Strengthen our statewide network of 107 CFCE to support families of children with high needs by incorporating the use of evidence based models.
- 2) Share information in multiple languages on children's learning and development and available state resources through a statewide public awareness campaign aimed at the families with children from birth to age 5.
- 3) Establish a cohort of trainers in each of the six state regions defined by EEC to provide ongoing coaching and guidance to frontline practitioners working with diverse families.
- 4) In partnership with the national Head Start training center, we will train 320 individuals (teams of three in our 107 CFCE grant communities) in parent, family, and community engagement by 2014

(a)

The state is developing culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across all levels of program and learning standards. We began by documenting best practice strategies to guide the field in supporting children and families whose home language is not English.

As we develop the standards, we are drawing on the state's experience with the statewide CFCE program, which offers grants to 107 culturally and linguistically competent community organizations to provide outreach and support to families with young high needs children (see below for more details). As part of a process that has prepared early childhood educators for the type of family engagement standards that service organizations should meet, CFCE grantees are asked to follow the Center for the Study of Social Policy's *Strengthening Families* framework, which includes parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child

development, concrete support in times of need, and children's social and emotional development.⁷⁵ They also are asked to annually catalogue the languages and populations in their communities; and to outline how they will provide resources and support to high-need families, including families with home languages other than English.

As will be discussed in below in (c), EEC will identify core elements of best practices used by premier family agencies around the state that offer high-need families with culturally and linguistically appropriate information about early childhood development. The work done to identify these core elements will feed into the state's overall efforts to develop standards in the area of family information and support.

The state already has made progress toward implementing culturally and linguistically appropriate standards through the CFCE grantees, who represent the most effective and culturally and linguistically-competent entities to reach families. Each year, the state allocates approximately \$14 million directly to the 107 community organizations. Grants ranging from \$33,000 to \$1 million fund organizations such as the Boston Public School System, Greater Lawrence Community Action Council and the Lowell Public Schools to help them provide critical information and support to families about child development, transition information, family literacy, school readiness, family and community resources and events. The grants also support effective delivery of up-to-date information and referrals to comprehensive services, information about high quality formal and informal early education and care opportunities, and other community resources that support parents in their role as their child's first teacher. These organizations also facilitate our birth to 5 (ASQ/ASQ SE) screening recommendations, and work closely with the local school district.

Building on EEC's efforts to articulate family-engagement requirements for CFCE grantees and on the development of family engagement standards, the state will take the following steps to create and apply a uniform set of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement activities in early education and care settings:

⁷⁵ Kagan, L. *Strengthening Families Framework*.

- Document best practice strategies to guide the field in supporting children and families whose first language is not English;
- Implement evidence-based practice English Language Development and train CFCE grantees to target their use in informal programs, while supporting the development of home language skills;
- Implementation of evidence-based, literacy-based practice within informal early learning programs and activities;
- Translate materials designed for families in at least five languages;
- Translate the *Guidelines for Preschool Early Learning Experiences* (See: (C)(1)), as we have done our *Infant/Toddler Guidelines*, into family-friendly methods, providing links to the full document in multiple languages.

(b)

Family engagement has a specific set of standards included in the tiered QRIS. This work is based in the programs involved in tiered QRIS; and level 2 requires use of the Center for the Study of Social Policy's *Strengthening Families* self-assessment. EEC will continue this practice, which we initiated in 2009, channeling \$2.3 million to professional development through our six Educator Provider Support (EPS) partnerships across the state that support planning, coaching and mentoring, and workforce core competency development. EPS grantees place a priority on providing training, coaching and mentoring, and technical assistance to staff who work in programs serving large percentages of high need children, those who receive subsidized child care due to low family income, English language learners, and children whose home language is not English. As part of their overall efforts, EPS grantees offer educators and caregivers of very young children technical assistance that focuses on effective strategies for family engagement. The technical assistance is guided by the 2008 findings of the National Early Literacy Panel, which include ensuring competency of parent educators relative to population's native language, customs and social norms; embedding a peer-based social component to training (partners, teams, groups) so parents have a mechanism for interacting with each other; and aiming for high-dosage, frequent interventions over a long period to maximize impact.

As EEC staff and grantees began working with teachers and providers to facilitate changes related to increasing cultural and linguistic competence, we recognized the need to increase training, knowledge and skills before we could systematically implement suggested practice. Knowing best practice is not enough. We need to be able to effectively implement the practice. We discovered that paraprofessionals, for example, often have the greatest capacity to incorporate best practice because, in higher percentages than lead teachers; they often speak languages other than English. However, using this asset of paraprofessionals requires additional training and a culture of change within the classroom. In addition to designing trainings to increase staff skills in implementing the strategies, EEC also has set a goal to develop six courses in native languages for paraprofessionals by June 2012, with a focus on the role of paraprofessionals in literacy and oral language development. In addition, because they are keys to promoting change, we are developing an online course for directors and community engagement staff on our standards for working with children who do not speak English.

Starting in June 2012, our EPS grantees will be asked to develop a workforce strategy that includes training on promoting anti-bias curricula, culturally and linguistically appropriate practices and maintaining and expanding the diversity and cultural and linguistic competence of the workforce itself. To date, as mentioned above, we have focused on creating access to secondary education for staff whose home language is not English. In addition, we ensure that the catalog of credit and non-credit courses includes offerings in languages other than English. As support, we will establish ongoing partnerships among the EPS grantees and the six RTT-funded Readiness Centers.

We also intend to increase the number and percentage of early childhood educators who are trained and supported to implement the family engagement strategies included in our program standards. We intend to establish a cohort of trainers in each of the six state regions defined by EEC to provide ongoing coaching and guidance to frontline practitioners working with diverse families. In partnership with the national Head Start training center, we will train 320 individuals (teams of three in our 107 CFCE grant communities) in parent, family, and community engagement by 2014. We will align this work with the *Strengthening Families Framework*. Agreements based on these core values are in place across state agencies to reinforce this work,

which is an example of how we will use existing structures to expand our reach to families and educators using evidence-based strategies, like those used by the Head Start training center with whom we will work.

Massachusetts currently collects some data related to children's risk factors associated with high need, through screening and assessments for example, but the next phases of the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan** will greatly expand this through the completion of our ECIS data system (See: (E)(2)), including collecting ECIS consent forms from parents; the screening and assessment of young children (See: (C)(2)); and targeted outreach (See below). To continuously improve how the state addresses these needs, we will tap our existing structures to provide more educators with the effective family engagement strategies above including our **CFCE and EPS grantees, Readiness Centers, Wraparound Zones, and Promise Neighborhood Support Grants and state agency partners**—all of which have a role in delivering programs, guidelines, access to support services, and training.

(c)

Massachusetts has already developed a series of strong initiatives focused on promoting support and engagement for families of children 0 to 5 that leverage resources from a wide array of partner agencies. The **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**, for the next stage of this work will maintain, and in many cases scale up, these initiatives and ensure that, through the use of the new standards and other practices, all the initiatives are part of a coordinated system of information and support for the state's youngest children, especially children with high levels of need, and their families. It's helpful to think of the strategies to achieve these goals by the lead agency/organization carrying them out: EEC, other state agencies, and public-private partnerships.

EEC

EEC's number one goal is to provide additional, targeted support to the 107 organizations who currently receive CFCE grants to address key knowledge gaps in family literacy.

In addition to the work supported by the grants, the CFCE program provides an infrastructure to effectively reach families in culturally and linguistically respectful ways. For example, the grant

application process favors organizations that engage and prioritize hard to reach families, including those that are “linguistically isolated.” Grantees are asked to catalog the languages and populations in their communities and outline how they will support diverse families, including those with home languages other than English. We believe in building a family engagement strategy that recognizes the strengths of diverse families and employs them as ambassadors and leaders in all of our programs, centers, schools and communities to expand appreciation and understanding for cultural diversity. For example, parents are involved in leadership on local governance councils; grantees provide trainings for parents who then take the lead in play groups and sometimes offer “parent cafes;” and parents often act as peer outreach workers to help engage new or “hard to reach” parents in their communities. We also offer multiple examples of family engagement activities on our website based off our programs standards used in the tiered QRIS⁷⁶.

And we’ve seen results: Grantees in Lawrence perform outreach to recent immigrants, refugees and English language learners through the Spanish-language radio station and newspaper and working with cultural and faith-based groups to inform families of these high need children about local early education programs and support services and to help translate resources. The city of Fall River translates its parent information in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Khmer and works with partners from the Department of Transitional Assistance, local church groups, and local health promotion groups to identify non-English or limited-English speaking families new to our country/community. The Worcester Community Action Council collaborates with the Interfaith Hospitality Network to provide outreach to homeless families.

EEC also will serve as a conduit for expanding local initiatives that have been successful in engaging families, by documenting and facilitating the transfer of information, data and best practices to help expand successful models elsewhere.

⁷⁶ Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care “Parent Engagement and Family Support” website: http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=edumodulechunk&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Government&L2=Departments+and+Boards&L3=Department+of+Early+Education+%26+Care&sid=Eoedu&b=terminalcontent&f=EEC_forms_guidance_parent_family_support&csid=Eoedu

The state's K-12 RTT initiative funded the creation of **Wraparound Zones**. Similar to the Harlem Children's Zone and federal Promise Neighborhood models, the purpose of the state's Wraparound Zones (WAZ) is to address non-academic and out-of-school learning barriers, while maximizing teaching and learning time to allow educators to focus on raising student achievement, building district, school and community capacity. In 2011-12, the state directed WAZ implementation monies to 21 schools in 5 districts. In support of this plan the RTT-ELC includes funds to expand these partnerships with schools, communities and state agencies to birth to 5, organizing access to existing state and local services versus providing new services.

Community Engagement Program Expansion: Massachusetts' long-term commitment and attention to community and family engagement has produced a number of successful family-community partnerships that have demonstrated high potential for reaching high needs families and connecting them to community resources. Among these, initiatives led by a school committee member in Holyoke and by the business community in Worcester; the Berkshire United Way and the Berkshire Compact for Education, which includes the community of Pittsfield; Lynn's *PACT (Parent and Child Together Time Program)*; and Springfield's *Reading Success by 4th Grade Initiative (RS4G)*.

Another example that illustrates some of the common themes to these approaches is *Thrive in Five* in Boston, a 10-year action plan to achieve universal school readiness and prevent the school readiness gap in Boston (In 2009, only 54% of Boston's children entered kindergarten ready). The city-wide movement has brought together young children's families, early care and education providers, health and human service providers, and the city to work across traditional sectors and systems and hone in on the cornerstones of the first "Five" years of a child's life, defined as: language development; cognition and general knowledge; approaches to learning; social and emotional development; and physical and motor development. "School Readiness" in Boston is currently measured by the DIBELS, a literacy assessment administered by the Boston Public Schools at kindergarten entry, among other measures.

Our plan calls for EEC to identify the core elements of practice that have allowed these programs to help families with high-need children integrate culturally and linguistically appropriate information about child development into their everyday lives. Once the core elements have been

identified, we will design a plan to add to the number of projects that reach out to families with linguistically and culturally appropriate information about early childhood development by making grants to support this kind of work in other settings, all based either in the 17 high need communities and at least 10 additional rural communities by FY 2014. We will dedicate \$1 million per year for the expansion of wrap zones described above in connection with improved local ownership for measureable outcomes as described here to focus on high need children and their families.

Family Literacy: With the use of specific evidence-based early literacy models, EEC will enhance the capacity of the CFCE grantees to help parents promote early literacy skills development in their children. By focusing on a small number of effective literacy models we will create more consistency in the strategies that CFCE grantees use to help families cultivate their children's literacy skills before they enter elementary schools. These models will ensure focus on home language development and be informed by our developing standards for English language development.

In another facet of our effort to encourage parents to provide a language-rich environment for their young children, EEC will spend \$11 million over a three-year period to implement an evidence-based early literacy program in each of the 17 communities identified by the Massachusetts Home-Visiting Needs Assessment Team as communities with the highest needs. These programs will serve 1,000 children in the first year, 2,000 in the second year, and 2,500 children in year three. We will also allocate funds to expand adult literacy activities funded by ESE or others to include a focus on early childhood literacy development when adult literacy programs have more than 50 percent enrollment of families with children under 6.

Early Learning and Development Support Materials: The EEC website, currently being revamped to increase family friendliness, includes resources for families seeking information on child development and early education and care-related programs. EEC also currently tries to reach parents of young children in diverse communities by translating brochures into multiple languages and engaging faith-based communities in efforts to offer immigrant families information related to early childhood development and services—for example, information

about screening, child care vouchers, and home visiting services. We will intensify our work in these areas. Over the course of the grant, we will translate materials developed into at least five languages when targeted for families.

Other State Agencies

Home-Visiting Program Expansion: The state’s Department of Public Health (DPH) currently oversees 21 home-visiting programs serving 49,000 families across the state, many through a U.S. Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) federal grant. Under our high quality plan, DPH, together with EEC, will offer one-time universal home-visiting to all families of newborns in select high-need communities. This home visit will provide screening for maternal and infant health, including social-emotional health. The state will also increase the number of highest need communities served by the Children’s Trust Fund’s successful *Healthy Families Massachusetts* home-visiting program from 5 to 17 and bolster services to reach more families in the 5 communities currently involved with the program. The program, operated by the Children’s Trust Fund, has a proven record of improving outcomes for high needs children, as recently recognized by the federal government through the award of a U.S. Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Program expansion grant. (See: Appendix O)

DPH will work with EEC to leverage these federal and state funds by 1) collaborating with MassHealth (Medicaid) to reimburse for home visiting; 3) seeking public and private insurance reimbursement for individual and group services provided by nurses, clinical social workers and other clinicians; and 4) engaging the public to encourage legislative support for *Healthy Families* and Early Intervention programs.

Health: Together EEC and DPH, working with other state agencies, will focus on a wrap-around approach to family engagement—an approach that recognizes that children’s learning and healthy development involve physical as well as developmental health. To do this, we sought and have received a two-year grant to expand the use of *Help Me Grow*, a model that uses the ASQ screening tool to educate families about child development, through our CFCE grantees in partnership with the University of Connecticut Health Center.

DPH also has agreed to ensure that children in state custody (through the Department of Children and Families) who are assessed by the Early Intervention program but have a delay or risk factors that do not meet EI criteria, are referred to DPH for any available supports. Additionally, DPH will determine the protocol and referral source to ensure smooth “handoffs” to quality early learning and care programs, such as Head Start. DPH is also working with EEC on a number of other programs that reach families by focusing on health needs such as vision, oral health, physical fitness and nutrition education, and new baby classes.

Financial Literacy: In order to continue to provide evidence-based practice and skills to educators working in the community, EEC recently completed a pilot project the state association of the community action agencies with a focus on financial literacy for families, educators and children. The project demonstrated how to integrate financial literacy programs aimed at the families of high need children into services offered in early care and education settings. Thus far, in a train-the-trainer effort, the project has prepared 114 participants around the state to offer this training in early education and care settings. We intend to expand this program: In four years, we will spend \$30,000 per year to train staff from all 107 CFCE grantee organizations (two staff members per organization), resulting in over 800 CFCE staff member trained to deliver this service over the four-year period. (See more details in Appendix LL).

Public-Private Partnerships

Massachusetts has partnered with the private sector, non-profits, IHEs and the business community, to help it advance a number of strategies related to young children. Family engagement is no different. Our strategic goals include expanding our *Brain Building in Progress* public awareness campaign, in conjunction with the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimac Valley; formalizing partnerships with the state’s 15 children’s museums through the innovative *Countdown to Kindergarten* program and the Massachusetts library association’s *Every Child Ready to Read* program; and including a strong set of valuable family outreach tools through our media partnership with WGBH.

While our state has a relatively small number of children in informal child care settings who receive state subsidies (less than 2,000 children), we intend for these and other private sector partnerships to serve as modes of outreach to these children and their families. We attempt to

reach them directly through vehicles such as our CFCE grants and child care resource and referral agencies (who provide induction training), but we also believe that by tapping a high number of private sector partners (as evidenced by 62 of support letters and the projects outlined in this plan) we can spread early learning information on areas like STEM and literacy as the next best option.

Communications Campaign: The **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan** will dramatically expand its *Brain Building in Progress Public Awareness Campaign*. Starting in 2010 the state partnered with the United Way of MassBay to launch a public awareness campaign aimed at educating families and the broader public about the importance of investing in young children, and specifically, developmentally appropriate parenting techniques to improve children’s chances at healthy growth.

Our plan will expand this campaign (See: Appendix P) by continuing to run television public service ads in Boston and Springfield; placing prominent print ads; printing and distributing campaign collateral, and exploring the possibility of creating a mobile device “app” for parents that includes screening, appropriately targeted activities, and connections to local resources. The Boston Children’s Museum also plans to join this effort. Already working with the state to close the achievement gap through its *Countdown to Kindergarten* permanent exhibit, the museum has agreed to train its entire staff on the research that informed the *Brain Building in Progress* message and coach them on what kind of language to use in talking to parents of young children about activities that will promote children’s learning and development. The museum also will embed the campaign signs and literature into its ongoing programming and engage all 15 children’s museums across the state in the campaign. (See: Appendix LL).

Partnership with Massachusetts Library Association: EEC has located Early Childhood Resource Centers in five public libraries across the state to provide parents with information about healthy child development and community resources—a partnership that we will expand, through more formal linkage with CFCE grantees.

WGBH Parent Tool: Boston-based WGBH, public television’s premier educational media developer (See: (D)(2)_and Appendix M) will partner with the state to create a “Digital Hub” of

media-based tools specifically designed for use by and with parents of children ages 0-5. WGBH will explore creation of a new “School Readiness” section on the *PBS Parents* site. It also will produce videos for parents that explain important developmental milestones and recommend activities and conversations for supporting their child’s learning. We will modify the messages to suit different media, from simple text messaging, to email newsletters, to mobile-optimized versions of the hub site and we will explore public library distribution of pre-loaded tablets as a strategy, to reach as many families as possible.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is poised to highly develop its family engagement and support strategies. We will execute the preceding initiatives, together with our state agencies and private sector partners to achieve our goals: 1) expand the availability of multi-lingual resources to the 167,026 families in Massachusetts with children from birth to age 5; 2) strengthen the statewide network of 107 strategically located CFCE grantees and tapping them for implementation of specific activities; and 3) establish cohorts of trainers statewide to provide ongoing coaching and guidance to frontline practitioners working with diverse families.

Massachusetts has made great strides to ensure culturally and linguistically appropriate standards are systemically part of our family outreach strategy. While work remains, in the areas of data collection in particular and addressing the needs of families whose home language is not English, we have the support structures in place to succeed in this work.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

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

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--

(a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;

(b) Implementing policies and incentives (e.g., scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and that are designed to increase retention;

(c) Publicly reporting aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention; and

(d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--

(1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

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

The success of the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan** hinges on the state expanding its **comprehensive workforce development system**, which improves and measures the education and training effectiveness at the classroom and program level. Massachusetts will draw on several strong assets as it undertakes this work. First, the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) can—and already does—tap into the resources of our state's world-class higher education institutions (IHEs) and a private sector that truly values education as an economic engine. For example, the state's public-private partnerships with entities like the Bessie Tartt

Wilson Initiative for Children⁷⁷ (BTWIC), Early Education and Care and Out-of-School Time Workforce Development Task Force (Workforce Task Force)⁷⁸, Strategies for Children,⁷⁹ Wheelock College, Urban College, University of Massachusetts, the quasi-public Commonwealth Corporation⁸⁰, and Boston-based WBGH (public television's pre-eminent production house), have exemplified innovative solutions for the workforce issue. Second, we have some of the highest standards for childhood educators in the country; for example, our tiered QRIS workforce standards require center-based care settings to have a teacher with a B.A. in every classroom – 25% of programs at Level 2; 100% of programs at Level 4.

Third, when an *Act Relative to Early Education and Care* passed the State Legislature unanimously in 2008, the state codified into law the creation of a comprehensive workforce development system that provides professional development and training and recognizes ways to improve educational attainment among early educators.⁸¹ For example, the law directed EEC to establish and regularly update: a comprehensive database of early childhood educators and providers, hereinafter referred to as the Professional Quality Registry (see (c)), for the purpose of enhancing the workforce development system.

Finally, the state will move forward on its workforce development agenda informed by several studies that give us a clear picture of the current status of our workforce, notably a University of Massachusetts report, “The Massachusetts Early Education and Care Development System Study: Year 1”; BTWIC’s “Blueprint for Early Education and Compensation,” Strategies for

77 Holas-Huggins, N. & Quarcoo, E. (2010). *Blueprint for early education compensation reform*. Bessie Tartt Wilson Initiative for Children. This report recommended the state’s strategy on compensation.

78 The Workforce Taskforce, convened by Bessie Tartt Wilson Initiative for Children, the United Way of Massachusetts bay and Merrimack Valley, and the Schott Fellowship in Early Care and Education, has given timely recommendations and strategies for early learning policies and incentives.

79 Strategies for Children. (2010). *Strategies for improving the early education and care workforce in Massachusetts*: This report recommended several strategies found in the state’s high quality plan, such as the state transfer compact, linkage to TQRIS and PQ registry.

80 Commonwealth Corporation (CC) Grants, which administers the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF) focused on innovative solutions for workforce development on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development provided a model for the state through its grant awards to initiatives that focus on the employers of the early childhood workforce, thus acknowledging the importance of high-quality early education to the economic vitality of the state. The Springfield and Worcester regions received CC grants, each region with a history of addressing barriers faced by early educators.

81 Strategies for Children. (2010). *Strategies for improving the early education and care workforce in Massachusetts*: Executive summary. (pp3). Retrieved from http://www.strategiesforchildren.org/eea/1publications/SFC_WD_Report_Full_March_2010.pdf

Children’s report “Strategies for Improving the Early Education and Care Workforce in Massachusetts,” and a number of studies lead by the Wellesley College Centers for Women.⁸² (See Appendix Q).

Over the next four years, the state will dedicate an estimated \$10 million (from RTTT-ELC budget) to the Comprehensive Workforce Development System to further the goals articulated here in (D)(2) and in the tables. The following sections explain our plan for developing that system, which not only meets the criteria for improving the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our state’s early childhood educators, but also reflects the assets for executing the plan that have just been discussed. The plan described below is based on advancing 1) access to effective professional development (practice-based support); 2) career advancement and professionalization through role expansion; 3) finance and compensation reform; and 4) evaluation of impact on classroom practice.

(a)

1) Massachusetts will provide and expand access to effective professional development opportunities over the next four years that are aligned with the state’s workforce knowledge and competency framework (WKCF).

Fundamental to the workforce system is Massachusetts’ Core Competencies for Early Education and Care and Out-of-School Time Educators (Core Competencies).⁸³ EEC established eight rigorous and inclusive core competency areas and collaborated with the Workforce Task Force in its comprehensive research on related standards and regulations. Massachusetts is among several states with core competencies for early education and care; however, it is unique in that it has a single set of core competencies for all types of early childhood education and care⁸⁴ and for

82 Douglass, A., Heimer, L., Hagan, W., (2011). The Massachusetts early education and care development system study: Year 1 report. (see Appendix); Marshall, N.L, Dennehy, J., Starr, E., & Robeson, W.W. (2005). Preparing the early education and care workforce: The capacity of Massachusetts’ institutions of higher education. Wellesley Center for Women. Retrieved from <http://www.pearweb.org/research/pdfs/Capacity.pdf>

83 Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care. (2011). Core competencies for early education and care and out-of-school time educators. (pp. 3-4). Retrieved from http://www.eec.state.ma.us/docs1/prof_devel/core_comp_packet.pdf

84 The Core Competencies apply to child care centers, out-of-school time programs, family child care homes, public preschool programs, private schools, preschool and kindergarten programs, and Head Start programs.

educators working with children and youth from birth to 14 years old, 16 with special needs. Also, the Core Competencies are linked to the *Infant/Toddler Early Learning Guidelines*, *Guidelines for Preschool Early Learning Experiences* and the *Pre-K Common Core Standards*, supports for children with high needs, and utilization and training required by the tiered QRIS.⁸⁵

Each of the 8 Core Competency areas has its own section describing the knowledge and skills early care and education and out-of-school time educators must be able to demonstrate in their work with children, families, and colleagues. The 8 areas of competency are: (See Appendix R for more detail): 1) Understanding the growth and development of children and youth; 2) Guiding and interacting with children and youth; 3) Partnering with families and communities; 4) Health, safety, and nutrition; 5) Learning environments and implementing curriculum; 6) Observation, assessment, and documentation; 7) Program planning and development; 8) Professionalism and leadership. Massachusetts' Core Competencies are being linked to all state-supported and approved training and therefore integrated into professional development opportunities across the field, providing a basis for approved training, coursework development, ongoing evaluation of staff, and for movement up the career ladder.

The six regional Educator Provider Support (EPS) grant recipients located across the state assist in supporting programs to gain competency with the Core Competencies, advance on standards in the tiered QRIS levels, lead educators to degree attainment (A.A., B.A. and Master's), and to support providers in attaining and maintaining accreditation or advancing on the tiered QRIS levels. The six EPS grant recipients are the main infrastructure that the state will tap into to expand access to professional development opportunities. EEC directs CCDBG funds to the six regional EPS grant recipients for early childhood education professional development each year, the state's primary vehicle through which early childhood educators gain access to effective professional development. Each recipient consolidates its region's disparate professional development opportunities for early childhood educators in order to achieve economies of scale, share resources, build local capacity, increase accountability to the state, and link to the continuing education units (CEUs) and college credit or enrollment. Over the next four years,

⁸⁵ As educators gain skills and knowledge that increase their level of competency, the programs they work in are better positioned to attain higher levels of quality on the tiered QRIS.

Massachusetts plans to expand and improve the EPS grant recipients access by effectively targeting its own budgeted funds,⁸⁶ as well as spend \$2 million of the proposed RTT-ELC funding on the following three core areas of professional development delivery: CAYL Institute and EPS Acceleration Strategy; competency development measurement as a result of training; and coaching and mentoring.

Model for Expansion. EEC will model the expansion of the EPS grant recipients’ work on developing individual plans for educators and providers to gain competency through opportunities such as trainings, online courses, and coaching and mentoring. These opportunities will not only help educators improve their competencies and classroom practice, based on the eight core competencies, but also support advanced degree attainment (A.A. or B.A.) Providers will also receive targeted support to meet the tiered QRIS Standards, accreditation, or program-wide competency in a core workforce area.

EPS grant recipients will target their resources to help expand access to effective professional development. The state will address the gaps—areas of need—through professional development or credit-bearing courses. Through research, standard and assessment alignment, and planning, the state has determined that educators need access to effective professional development courses focused on early social emotional development, English language development, formative assessment and data usage, family engagement, children with high needs, STEM, and standards alignment—all of which support advancement in the tiered QRIS. The organizations who currently receive EPS grants not only will coordinate access to professional development on these topics within their own region but will also collaborate with the regional Readiness Centers.⁸⁷ The state’s six regional Readiness Centers, RTT K-12 funded, offer professional development and instructional services focused on birth-20, (whereas EPS grant recipients focus on early childhood education and out of school time), thus facilitating professional development

⁸⁶ The state has already allocated \$2 million of its own budget to the EPS Grants and Readiness Centers, both established programs, which will coordinate on the implementation of the Plan.

⁸⁷ The state already offers an abundance of effective professional development opportunities in various stages of implementation – the building blocks - which address all levels of development. Some of these include but are not limited to: Birth to Eight Leadership Institute, Infant and Toddler Leadership Training, Birth to 8 Language and Literacy Online Course, ESE and EEC State Curriculum Standards Alignment trainings at Readiness Centers, Early Childhood Educators (ECE) Scholarship Program, MA Children at Play “I am Moving, I am Learning” trainings.

opportunities within a larger, aligned educational continuum that links pre-K and K-12 professionals and trainings.

The **CAYL Institute and EPS Acceleration Strategy** is the first core area that the six EPS grant recipients will target their resources to expand access to effective professional development. In FY11, EEC established a system of six regional EPS partnerships to provide professional development across the state to the early education and out of school time field. EEC hired Community Advocates for Young Learners (CAYL) Institute, to convene the lead agencies for group discussions and planning about how best to deliver professional development services. CAYL is now consulting individually with each of the agencies to help them develop plans for strengthening their professional development offerings, the benchmarks for reaching their goals and ways to measure progress. This system of individualized technical assistance and planning for EPS-funded providers maximizes the potential of EPS to support an increasingly coherent and articulated regional system of early childhood education professional development (Acceleration Strategy).

Competency Development is the second core area that EPS grant recipients plan to target resources to expand lead teachers' access to effective professional development by focusing on opportunities aligned with the Core Competencies. We will validate that teachers are gaining skills through state funded training in at least three areas: literacy, numeracy and social emotional skills. EEC will develop a cost-effective program that will train teachers to assess individual students in order to generate data that reflects cultural, linguistic and developmental sensitivity and informs us of child progress and readiness over time.

Beginning in July 2012, Massachusetts plans to *evaluate the effectiveness of the state-funded workforce development programs*. In order to ensure the trainings are leading to improved practice, the state will design an evaluation of both coursework towards higher education degrees and how well early educator trainings reflect the eight core competencies. In addition, the state plans to design a process to certify trainers and/or consultants, mapping the content of training against the core competencies, and ensuring that training is practice- and knowledge- focused.

An example of competency verification of professional development follows; by 2014 EEC plans to administer and offer lead teachers training in the following: the *Behavior Rating Scale* and the *Social Skills Rating System*, which focuses on better understanding the severity of behavior problems leading to expulsion rates; the *Preschool Expulsion Risk Measure* (Gilliam, 2008), which looks at the likelihood that a teacher will expel a preschooler. The 11-item *Parent Involvement Measure*, which looks at the level of parent involvement; the *Child Care Worker Job Stress Inventory*, which looks at teacher job stress, sense of job control, and job resources (the degree to which the teacher feels good about his/her work) and its direct link to expulsion rates; and the *Preschool Mental Health Climate Scale* (PMHCS; Gilliam, 2010), which uses observers to rate the social-emotional climate of preschool and child care programs. All of these are or will be linked to the tiered QRIS.

Coaching and Mentoring is the third core area that the six EPS grant recipients will target resources to expand access to effective professional development. Research demonstrates that coaching promotes meaningful improvements to teaching quality, and offers a new pathway for professional growth to more experienced and successful teachers. Additionally it is widely believed to be an effective and efficient (e.g. less costly) method to provide professional development.⁸⁸ Drawing on NAEYC and NARA's recent and authoritative publication on coaching and on a review of four specific professional development coaching models, EEC will model its peer coaching and mentoring program after the Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) in Rochester, in combination with the Head Start and Early Learning Start resource *Steps to Success* professional development system. PAR uses peers to support one another's work and provides well-developed training for coaching; and the *Steps* materials are designed to support mentors and coaches and the individuals who train them.⁸⁹ The state plans to increase access to practice-based trainings and support by establishing a minimum of 15 coaches in each of the six

88 NAEYC & NACRRA (2010). Early childhood education technical assistance and training glossary. Retrieved from http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/ecprofessional/NAEYC_NACRRA_TrainingTAGlossary.pdf

88 Isner, T., Tout, K., Zaslow, M., Soli, M., Quinn, K., Rothenberg, L. & Burkhauser, M. (2011). Coaching in Early Care and Education Programs and Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS): Identifying Promising Features. Retrieved from http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2011_04_27_FR_CoachingEarlyCare.pdf

89 The Steps for Success materials are publicly available on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center's website There is an online communication network available for support called STEP-net (<http://www.step-net.org>).

EPS grant regions (90 coaches total) across the state. Over the next four years, the state has allocated \$1.9 million of the proposed RTTT funds for this new large-scale initiative.

It is critical that the professional development opportunities just discussed are well aligned with our Workforce Core Competencies. One resource that will help us ensure alignment is the IHE Mapping Project discussed in the next section (b). This ongoing project will map the courses of participating IHEs in its database onto one or more of the EEC Core Competency areas, making it possible to easily ensure the courses are aligned with the competencies that we consider basic to sound early education and care professional development.

(b)

2) *Massachusetts will implement policies and incentives that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated pathway that is aligned with the WKCF, and that are designed to increase retention.* Over the next four years, Massachusetts plans to achieve professional improvement, career advancement, and retention by effectively targeting its own budgeted funds⁹⁰ as well as an estimated \$4 million of the RTT-ELC funding on the following three core areas; transferring early childhood education credits between IHEs, engaging the field at all levels, and targeting support for specific gaps in knowledge and skill.

Transferring Early Childhood Education Credits Among IHEs. Part of our plan focuses on removing an obstacle to education career advancement in the early childhood education field: students' difficulties in transferring early childhood education related credits when they move from one institution to another. We will draw on the resources of the EEC-funded *IHE Mapping Project* to address this problem. The project, which has been operating since 2010, has produced a map that profiles a network of 33 Massachusetts IHEs that participate in the project, all of which offer an early childhood education programs of study, an elementary education program, or program in a related field that leads to a certificate and/or an associate's or a bachelor's degree. The map includes a searchable database of required coursework for early childhood education degree programs, which allows for comparisons of the requirements for early childhood degrees and certificates at participating IHEs.

90 The state has already allocated \$2 million of its own budget to the six EPS grant recipients and Readiness Centers, both established programs, which will coordinate on the implementation of the Plan.

A second resource that will help us in solving transfer problems is the state's *Early Childhood Education Transfer Compact*. The compact has been signed but in order to ensure it is proper implementation, EEC has worked proactively with the Secretariat, Department of Higher Education (DHE) and IHEs to address continuing efforts to facilitate the transfer of credit within the public higher education system. EEC plans to take the more aggressive approach of streamlining the transfer process to reduce students' uncertainty about acceptance into licensure programs, which is to push IHEs to apply the same requirements to transfer students as other students. To accomplish this EEC is planning a college presidents' forum, convened by EEC Commissioner Sherri Killins and Wheelock College President Jackie Jenkins-Scott; and EEC will work with Boston Public Schools to evaluate its data on apparent gaps in teacher preparedness, particularly in regard to content knowledge. In addition EEC plans to dedicate \$40,000 per year over the next four years to a 0.5 time position at DHE to focus specifically on improving the goals of the transfer compact.

Engage Field at all Levels. Massachusetts is developing a broad career advancement and professional improvement strategy for the early childhood education field at all levels (paraprofessional, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree). For paraprofessionals, we will offer online support aimed at developing leadership skills specific to working with non-native speaking families and supporting children in their home language while understanding and supporting the process of English language development.

To encourage early childhood educators to pursue degrees we have in place an *Early Childhood Educators Scholarship Program*, which since 2006 has provided more than 5,000 scholarships to currently employed early educators to pursue associate's or bachelor degrees in early childhood education and care or related programs. The state will continue to provide *Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK)* quality enhancement grants. An Abt Associates study found that in 2008 nearly half (48%) of these grant funds were spent on staff development.

Massachusetts is fortunate to be home to 11 Master's level early childhood education and care courses. We will be investing in a program being developed at an IHE to create a *post-Master's program in early education policy and leadership*. We believe this course has the potential to cultivate a new generation of early childhood leaders in the state.

Targeted Support for Specific Gaps in Knowledge/Skills. The state will focus on addressing professional development for specific gaps in knowledge and skills, such as social emotional development, children with high needs, STEM, standards alignment, assessment training, the needs of English language learners through bilingual courses and other educational supports and the tiered QRIS.

We also plan to invest in an IHE's exemplary program for English language learners. The innovative program addresses the high demand for bilingual and multi-lingual early education and care professionals who can competently serve the growing numbers of young children who are linguistically diverse and need an early, strong and supportive foundation in learning English so that they can succeed in school great need for well-prepared. Over the next four years, we will utilize this program to support multi-lingual early childhood practitioners navigate higher degrees attainment requirements and quality improvement through the tiered QRIS.

Additionally, the state plans to coordinate with IHEs in developing and delivery of online early childhood education courses, aligned with the Core Competencies, which address the above identified gaps in provider and educator knowledge. For example, *University of Massachusetts Boston's Open Course Ware (OCW)*, which is advancing technology-enhanced education, will serve as a model for university dissemination of knowledge in the Internet age. Core Competency and Preschool Learning Guidelines courses, as well as CEUs and college credit courses will be offered for free on OCW for self study.

In addition, EEC plans to partner with public television station WGBH to develop high quality content to support early educators with a focus on STEM, literacy and numeracy resources. Boston-based WGBH, public television's pre-eminent production house and one of the nation's leading producers of media-based resources to support teaching and learning, will serve as the state's media partner in the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**, leveraging and expanding upon its role as media partner in the state's K-12 RTT initiative. WGBH will produce a "Digital Hub," a free, online platform that will feature a centralized library of tools, direct links to related materials, and customized pathways to guide the teachers, parents, and other care providers through the site, maximizing direct relevance, accessibility, and utility. The hub's core resources will derive from early childhood education curricula developed around two of WGBH's award-

winning television programs: *Between the Lions (BTL)* and *Peep and the Big Wide World (PEEP)*. Comprised of lesson plans, video segments, and interactive games, these curricula specifically target English Language Arts, STEM, and social/emotional skills, the domains featured in the state’s tiered QRIS standards.

WGBH also will produce a series of media-based **professional development modules**, both for educators of children ages 3-5 and for educators working with infants and toddlers. Delivered through videos, interactives, and PDFs, these materials will include introductory and follow-up modules that address foundational skills, a comprehensive range of videos presenting “best practice” in applying the teaching strategies outlined in the tiered QRIS standards, and illustrations of effective and appropriate use of media with young children. Research shows teachers who used WGBH’s produced programs “improved dramatically.”⁹¹ (See Appendix M).

3) *As part of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Workforce Development System, the Commonwealth plans to implement finance and compensation reform for early educators.* To accomplish this goal the state plans to advance the career ladder, the early educator earned income tax credit and the development of a public-private endowment fund. Also, the state will dedicate \$800,000 to provide stipends for early educators for utilizing advanced skills (e.g. norm referenced assessments and coaching) and support programs in affording formative assessment tools in exchange for agreements to address compensation and through Massachusetts’ tiered QRIS Implementation Program, over the next four years. (See (B) for details.) As a condition for receiving professional development resources, the recipient programs will be required to participate in a MOU that outlines benefits including compensation for their early childhood educators who receive state-supported training.

In an important step to move toward a system that better rewards professional development, EEC has developed a state *Early Education and Out of School Time Career Ladder*, which includes proposed salaries on each level of the ladder, with salary levels based on research by the Bessie Tarrt Wilson Initiative for Children, which, in turn, draws on data from the U.S. Department of

91 Squires, J., Twombly, E., Bricker, D., Potter, L., (2009). ASQ-3 user’s guide. Retrieved from http://agesandstages.com/pdfs/asq3_technical_report.pdf

Labor and from EEC's PQ Registry (See below). Proposed salary increments have been added to each level of the basic ladder in recognition of educators' increased knowledge, skills and responsibilities as they advance in their careers. Further work will be performed on the Ladder this year by the Bessie Tarrt Wilson Initiative for Children (BTWIC), where the Commissioner of EEC sits on the planning committee.

A tax credit strategy can begin to address the issue of inadequate compensation, immediately impacting the lowest paid workers in the field by allowing them to keep more of their income. The BTWIC has spearheaded support for a bill currently pending in the State Legislature that calls for the creation of a 15% refundable tax credit for early educators. Based on the Earned Income Tax Credit, the proposed credit is intended to serve as a financial support for low-income members of the field.

In order to address the compensation challenge, EEC's private sector partner, BTWIC, is advancing the creation of a *public – private early education endowment fund* to support compensation for low-wage educators, the career ladder implementation that is tied to wages, grants to programs, and increased support for high quality, evidence-based programming for children linked to the tiered QRIS. The endowment would be best managed and administered by an existing early education organization or by a foundation with a board of advisors/trustees that sets policy, oversees access, selects grantees, and evaluates the fund. (EEC would sit on the Board).

(c)

4) Massachusetts plans to publicly report aggregated data on early childhood educator development, advancement, and retention through its established Professional Qualifications Registry and tiered QRIS, and the planned evaluation of the comprehensive workforce development system. Over the next four years, Massachusetts plans to publicly report aggregated data on early childhood educator development, advancement, and retention by not only targeting its own budgeted funds but also monies from RTT-ELC funding. (See (A)(4)).

In January 2010, the state required that educators, including assistants, who work with infants, toddlers, preschoolers, or school age children in EEC-licensed settings must register annually in the state's *Professional Qualifications (PQ) Registry*. Currently 41,599 educators have created personal profiles on the registry as of July 2011. The registry gathers information on the size, composition,

education, experience of the state's current workforce, and the retention and turnover of educators working in early education and care and out-of-school time programs. Already the PQ Registry, in conjunction with Labor Department data, has provided valuable information that led to the development of the *MA Early Education and Out of School Time Career Ladder* (see below). Our goal is for the PQ Registry to include all early childhood educators by 2013. We expect this data to be instrumental in helping EEC respond to the needs of all educators, programs and the tiered QRIS.

Additionally, another important program for sharing aggregated data is the state's *tiered QRIS*, which is designed to report aggregated data and includes requirements for our educators' professional development, advancement, and retention through the inputs on credentials and experience. We plan to make this aggregate data available to the public following the tiered QRIS validation, which will occur the initial year of the RTT-ELC grant (See (B)(5)). The state has allocated \$4 million from the RTT-ELC to the tiered QRIS (See (A)(4)).

(d)(1) The state's goals for increases set forth in (d)(1) are as follows. Today the state has 26 IHEs aligned with the Core Competencies and the state's WKCF and the state plans to double that by increasing to 58 IHEs by 2015, including 100% of the public IHEs and 9 private institutions. For 2010-11 the total number of early childhood educators credentialed by an "aligned" IHE is 1,017 and the state plans to increase that by a third by 2015 to 1,341, an 8% increase in each year of the grant.

We believe these goals are achievable because of our initiatives discussed above, like the EPS Grants, Readiness Centers, UPK Program, IHE Mapping Project, Transfer Compact, and tiered QRIS. For example, the EPS grants and the Readiness Centers are tremendous assets for ensuring that professional development opportunities become more available throughout all regions of the state. The Tiered QRIS directly provides programs with incentives to move up the levels by supporting early educators in career enhancement. The IHE Mapping Project and Transfer Compact are direct attempts to smooth out the transfer of early childhood education credits between IHEs to make attaining a higher degree more achievable.

(d)(2) The state's goals for increases set forth in (d)(2) are as follows. Today there are 4,001 (10%) early childhood educators who have a Child Development Associate/early childhood Certificate and the state's goal for 2015 is 4,751 (11%). Today there are 1,020 (2%) early childhood educators who

have an Associate's Degree in early childhood education and the state's goal for 2015 is 2,320 (6%). Today there are 557 (1%) early childhood educators who have a Bachelor's Degree in early childhood education and the state's goal for 2015 is 1,357 (3%). Today there are 103 (0.2%) early childhood educators who have a Post-Graduate Degree in early childhood education (M.Ed. & Ph.D.) and the state's goal for 2015 is 303 (1%). We believe these goals are achievable because of initiatives, discussed above, which move the state toward a system that better supports professional development as well as initiatives aimed at better rewarding early educators such as the tiered QRIS Implementation Program, stipends (for services, materials and training), career ladder, income tax credit and the endowment fund.

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(1): Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators receiving credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework					
	Baseline (Today)	Target - end of calendar year 2012	Target - end of calendar year 2013	Target - end of calendar year 2014	Target – end of calendar year 2015
Total number of “aligned” institutions and providers	26 IHEs are aligned with EEC Core Competencies	32 IHEs (6 additional public IHEs with associate and bachelor degree programs in ECE; 100% of public IHEs aligned with EEC Core Competencies)	40 IHEs (8 additional private IHEs with associate and bachelor degree programs in ECE)	49 IHEs (9 additional private IHEs with associate and bachelor degree programs in ECE)	58 IHEs (9 additional private IHEs with associate and bachelor degree programs in ECE; 100% of MA IHEs aligned with EEC Core Competencies)
Total number of Early Childhood Educators credentialed by an “aligned” institution or provider	1017 early childhood educators credentialed by an aligned IHE in academic year 2010 – 2011	1098 early childhood educators credentialed by aligned IHEs; an 8% increase from the previous year	1179 early childhood educators credentialed by aligned IHEs; an 8% increase from the previous year	1260 early childhood educators credentialed by aligned IHEs; an 8% increase from the previous year	1341 early childhood educators credentialed by aligned IHEs; an 8% increase from the previous year
<i>[Please indicate whether baseline data are actual or estimated and describe the methodology used to collect the data, including any error or data quality information; and please include any definitions you used that are not defined in the notice. If baseline data are not currently available please describe in your High-Quality Plan in your narrative how and when you will have baseline data available.]</i>					

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

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

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--

- (a) Is aligned with the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;**
- (b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;**
- (c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;**
- (d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and**
- (e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).**

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

Assessing children’s school readiness at kindergarten entry is essential to identifying the learning needs of children and targeting instructional and programmatic support. This point takes on added significance when discussing high needs children, who often enter school behind in foundational developmental skills and knowledge, putting them at risk for future academic struggles. The Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA) will play a necessary role in describing children’s early learning and developmental trajectories while also arming state and local educators with new tools for addressing achievement gaps at one of the earliest points in children’s public school careers.

Envisioned as a key component of the broader Massachusetts Early Learning and Development (MELD) assessment system (see criterion (C)(2)), the MKEA will use formative assessment to establish children’s level of school readiness and monitor learning progress in kindergarten across all essential domains of school readiness (e.g. language and literacy development,

cognition and general knowledge, including early mathematics and early scientific development, approaches toward learning, physical well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development). Participating public elementary schools will use an approved formative assessment tool, including the *Work Sampling System*, *Teaching Strategies-GOLD*, the *High Scope COR*, or any tool that is shown to be evidence-based, aligned with the state's tiered QRIS (See: Section (B)) and curriculum frameworks (See: (C)(1)), and approved by the Departments of Early Education and Care (EEC) and Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE). An evaluation, including psychometric testing such as item analysis, of approved assessment tools will occur to develop a statewide common metric for measuring children's level of school readiness and provide information on school readiness gaps. Table (E)(1)-1, provides a summary of the state's high-quality plan, including key goals and activities, the project timeline, roles and responsibilities, and financing, to improve overall program quality and better support high needs children. The remainder of this section addresses (E)(1)(a) through (E)(1)(e).

(a)

The MKEA will serve four primary goals to support young children in achieving benchmarks critical to their learning and development and reduce school readiness gaps among high needs populations. They were informed by a state survey of public school kindergarten teachers detailed in Appendix S and include:

1. **Assess children's growth and learning**, using formative assessment, across all essential domains of school readiness. The intention is that this type of assessment data will be valuable in guiding state educational practices and policies to reduce school readiness gaps and support learning for all children.
2. **Inform local practice and strengthen professional development.** The MKEA will benefit teachers and schools by providing new information about children's developmental status, informing instructional practices, and targeting resources, over time, toward professional development opportunities designed to address gaps in knowledge and skills.

3. **Develop a valid and reliable common statewide measure of children's school readiness.** The MKEA will be a coordinated and coherent assessment of all children in kindergarten to improve program outcomes and accountability, a goal shared by EEC and ESE. Through linkages to state standards and later state assessments (the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), which students first take in math and English/Language Arts in grade three), the MKEA will provide a basis for measuring children's growth.
4. **Improved communication with families and decision-makers.** Teachers are expected to share individual and classroom level data with families through report cards and other forms of communication. Aggregate data collected at the district and state level may be used by superintendents and state leaders to guide professional development, improve alignment of school and community services and target funding.

To meet these goals, the MKEA will require participating public elementary schools to use one of three formative assessment tools: the *Work Sampling System*, *Teaching Strategies-GOLD*, and the *High Scope COR* or another approved tool. These tools have been approved by EEC and ESE because they are evidence-based and measure individual child development and growth and are appropriate for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and children with special needs. The state already requires the use of at least one of these three tools in pre-k programs participating in the state's tiered QRIS or receiving universal pre-kindergarten grants, establishing a strong foundation for building an aligned comprehensive assessment system from pre-k to third grade in which the MKEA is embedded. The state worked extensively with Oldham Innovative Research in identifying and selecting the three approved tools. They were shown to cover all developmental domains, offer an online component for easier data management, and align with state standards in use at that time.

In 2011, Massachusetts adopted new curriculum frameworks that incorporate pre-K into the Common Core Standards. An analysis to determine the degree of alignment between the state's full list of updated early learning standards (e.g. *Massachusetts Early Learning Guidelines for Infant and Toddler*, *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks in English Language Arts and*

Mathematics (Pre-K Common Core), Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework (See: (C)(1)) and each approved formative assessment tool included in the state's early learning and development agenda. This work will occur in two phases: first, the state will ensure that its various standards are, in fact, aligned and representative of a seamless system of learning; second, it will determine the degree of alignment between these standards and approved assessment tools (e.g. *the Work Sampling System, Teaching Strategies-GOLD, and High Scope COR*). We anticipate researchers conducting a high-complexity alignment analysis that stresses in-depth comparisons of content across three parameters: balance (i.e. distribution across developmental domains), coverage/depth (i.e. the degree to which particular elements of learning are addressed), and difficulty (i.e. the relative cognitive demand of indicators that are being compared). This analysis will also account for the degree to which the tools are suited to high needs populations, including English Language Learners and children with special needs. It will demonstrate the extent to which approved assessment tools align with Massachusetts' learning standards and curriculum frameworks. Should gaps be identified, EEC and ESE anticipate working with assessment providers to customize their tools for use in Massachusetts.

The state also anticipates integrating the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium's still-in-development kindergarten to grade two assessment into the MKEA. Massachusetts is one of 24 states that have joined PARCC, and ESE Commissioner Mitchell Chester is the current chair of the PARCC governing board. The PARCC K-2 assessment is scheduled to become operational in 2014 at a time when other approved formative assessment will have been in the field for two years. For this reason, Massachusetts will use the duration of the RTT-ELC grant period to evaluate and revisit decisions made about the effectiveness of approved formative assessment tools. The state's intention is to reach the end of the grant period with an aligned early learning and development assessment system that tracks children's learning, at a minimum, from pre-kindergarten to third grade, while emphasizing school readiness in the kindergarten year.

(b)

The Commonwealth's approach to the MKEA prioritizes local control, while establishing appropriate state guidelines for assessing children's learning. With the ideal in mind to maintain

appropriate balance between state support and oversight and local choice and flexibility, our plan will use psychometric testing, including item analysis techniques, to develop a common metric of children's school preparedness from the three pre-approved formative assessment tools. It is this balanced approach to guiding children's learning that has made Massachusetts a national leader in education.

Specifically, EEC, in partnership with ESE, will contract a qualified IHE to **produce a common measure of school readiness**. Having established that the *Work Sampling System*, *Teaching Strategies-GOLD*, and *High Scope COR* are appropriately aligned with and modified to state standards (See: (C)(2)) and indicative of children's progress toward desired benchmarks, the state will conduct psychometric testing, including item analysis, to produce an internally valid, common measure of children's school readiness in kindergarten. The focus of the psychometric testing is to determine areas of shared content and variations in difficulty and discrimination of assessment test questions. The resulting common measure (or uniform progress score) will provide data that can be aggregated regardless of the formative assessment tool used to provide a statewide picture of where children are at kindergarten entry and how they progress over the year.

(c)

The state envisions a four-year plan funded at \$3.2 million to design and implement the MKEA, which will be scaled up over time through four distinct cohorts. Two primary considerations were given to selecting participants for Cohort I. First, the school district needed to have the necessary infrastructure and internal knowledge and capacity to effectively carry out the formative assessment scheme envisioned by EEC. Second, priority was given to those districts with large proportions of high needs students who are most likely to benefit from the MKEA. Cohort I includes 6 of the state's 10 largest school districts and 11 of the 17 highest-need communities as identified in Massachusetts MIECHV initiative.

Cohort II will include all remaining 160 school districts that receive state-funded kindergarten expansion grants. Massachusetts currently commits \$22.9 million to transition half-day kindergarten programs into full-day and improve the quality of full-day classrooms. Participating

in the MKEA will become a requirement for the 164 school districts receiving these grants in 2013. Cohort III and Cohort IV will include all remaining school districts in Massachusetts, which tend to be higher-performing and less dependent on state aid. Table (E)(1)-2 provides greater detail on each cohort.

Project timeline: The MKEA will be introduced in school districts over a four-year period, starting with a small cohort serving primarily high needs students and expanding through Kindergarten expansion grants already provided for through the Massachusetts state budget:

- Cohort 1 – 24 school districts, 17,5008 students
- Cohort 2 – 158 school districts, 29,827 students
- Cohort 3 – 60 school districts and 50% charter schools, 11,788 students
- Cohort 4 – 64 school districts and 50% charter schools, 8,381 students

Table E(1)-2

Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment: School District Cohorts, Years 1 to 4				
Cohort	Description	Districts	Students	Teachers
Cohort 1	22 districts make up the initial MKEA cohort: • Boston • Cambridge • Chelsea • Everett • Holyoke • Lawrence • Lowell • Lowell Community Charter School • Ludlow • Lynn • Marion • Mattapoisett • Medford • New Bedford • Northhampton • Pittsfield • Rochester • South Hadley • Southbridge • Springfield • Tauton • Ware • Watertown • Worcester	24	17,500	874
Cohort 2	• Districts receiving Kindergarten Development Grants	158	29,827	1,436
Cohort 3	• Remaining Level 3 and Level 2 districts that do not receive Kindergarten Development	60	11,788	420

	Grants			
	• 50% of charter public schools with a kindergarten enrollment			
Cohort 4	• Remaining Level 1 districts that do not receive Kindergarten Development Grants • Remaining 50% of charter public schools with a kindergarten enrollment	64	8,381	311

Key strategies for meeting the planned project timeline include the following:

Year 1 - 2012

- Secure MOU between EEC and ESE to enable data sharing and ensure common use of assessments in programs overseen by both agencies.
- Finalize funding for MKEA and state strategies for supporting public school districts in conducting formative assessments.
- Meet with local school district partners at least three times to inform the process of searching for a common set of items that link across assessment tools and programs.
- In partnership with IHEs take necessary steps to design the MKEA, including:
 - Systematically examine all early childhood education child assessment data collected in the previous year and determine the data quality for the purposes of this project.
 - Assess degree of alignment between state standards and approved formative assessment tools;
 - Validate approved assessment tools as appropriate for measuring kindergarten readiness using norm-referenced assessments; and
 - Conduct item analysis of approved assessment tools to develop a common metric aligned with PARCC.
- Align PK-2 data collection with P-20 database to support Statewide Longitudinal Data System (see (E)(1)(d)).

- Finalize the first cohort for the MKEA, prioritizing those districts serving high needs children with the infrastructure necessary to support the effective implementation and use of the MKEA.

Year 2 – 2013

- Complete a pilot study to test the common metric across a large sample of schools with the aim to use the results to inform a unified child assessment system for all children.
- Produce three reports to document and explain the development of the MKEA.
 - A technical report on how the state’s common metric was developed and the developmental and pre-academic domains being measured;
 - A report showing the results of the pilot study using the common metric; and
 - A set of recommendations to track student progress and set of recommendations to inform professional development opportunities.
- Identify the second cohort for the MKEA. This cohort will include 159 school districts receiving kindergarten expansion grants.

Year 3 - 2014

- Identify the third cohort for the MKEA. This cohort will include all remaining level 2 and level 3 school districts that do not received kindergarten development grants and 50% of public charter schools with kindergarten enrollments. Level 2 districts contain schools identified for corrective action or restructuring. Level 3 districts contain one or more schools among the lowest-performing 20% based on quantitative indicators.

Year 4 - 2015

- Identify the fourth cohort for the MKEA. This cohort will include all remaining level 1 school districts that do not received kindergarten development grants and the remaining 50% of public charter schools with kindergarten enrollments. Level 1 districts possess no schools in corrective action or restructuring.

(d)

A priority in the Commonwealth's successful application in the first Race to the Top competition was to improve and expand its Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). Key to this plan, which is now being implemented, is building an integrated P-20 system that facilitates data sharing across all education departments (e.g. EEC, ESE, DHE, and EOE) and other appropriate state agencies and uses collected information as the basis for creating an *Early Warning and Opportunity System*. A MOU already has been signed by the state's education departments to permit the uploading and sharing of data, including student information, curriculum planning, and assessment outcomes. The P-20 system, once fully operational, will allow stakeholders to gain much needed information to address educational needs and target resources at the student, classroom, school, and district level, or develop and implement statewide reforms. MKEA outcomes will be critical data elements within the larger P-20 system, helping to establish students' level of development at an early point in their educational careers, anticipate their learning trajectories, and support longitudinal research and analyses.

The state's data systems are discussed in greater detail in section (E)(2), which outlines its high-quality plan in this policy area.

(e)

Massachusetts views public education as the engine that drives its knowledge-based economy toward a future of sustained prosperity. This is not empty rhetoric. During the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, funding for public education through the state's Chapter 70 formula has remained strong. In fiscal year 2012, nearly \$4 billion dollars in state aid went to local school districts. Kindergarten entry assessments are a permissible use of these funds.

In addition, the state has recognized that many costs compete for local education budgets and established the Kindergarten Expansion Grants program, administered by ESE outside Chapter 70 and funded at \$22.9 million in FY12, to expand and improve the quality of full-day kindergarten (FDK) classrooms. From 2000 to the present, the percent of FDK classrooms in Massachusetts increase to 38% to 80%. Given the progress that has been made, we will require the 164 to participate in the MKEA to continue to receive grant funding. We anticipate repurposing the allowable uses of grant funds to support this requirement.

EEC also has taken strong steps to support early learning and development programs and public schools in purchasing and using formative assessment tools. EEC awarded Associated Early Care and Education \$800,000 Assessment Grants in both fiscal years 2010 and 2011 to provide statewide training in assessment and screening. An RFP for the fiscal year 2012 *Assessment and Measurement Grant* is now open with proposals due on October 19, 2011. EEC anticipates continuing to provide ongoing professional development through our state Readiness Centers, regional professional development hubs significantly enhanced through the first successful Race to the Top Competition. We have budgeted \$2.4 million to support Readiness Centers in providing trainings on child assessment and data use and anticipate, over time, leveraging information gathered through formative assessments to better structure professional development opportunities to address gaps in children's knowledge and skills.

Key focus areas of the Readiness Centers are:

- Choosing an appropriate assessment tool;
- Administering formative assessments;
- Addressing learning across all developmental domains;
- Interpreting and using data and results; and
- Sharing information with parents and families;

Summary

The MKEA will create a population-level understanding of children's school readiness as well as create alignment across EEC and ESE in supporting programs use of assessments through a common measure. It will empower programs to continue using formative assessment tools already in use in classrooms to leverage best practices increase teacher, administrator, and agency level understanding of student outcomes.

Benefits

- Provides statewide assessment of children's growth and learning across all essential domains of school readiness,

- Informs the allocation of EEC and ESE resources, as well as those of participating state agencies devoted to supporting children's school readiness.
- Informs local practice and strengthens professional development, leading to more individualized teaching and learning.
- Charts systemic, classroom, and individual progress toward developmentally informed benchmarks aligned with state learning standards.
- Provides schools with new sources of data to share with families through report cards and other forms of communication.
- Informs policymakers and the public about how children are progressing across all developmental domains.
- Provides a valid and reliable common measure of school preparedness that can be aggregated to the state level to gain crucial information on school readiness gaps.

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

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to enhance the State's existing Statewide Longitudinal Data System or to build or enhance a separate, coordinated, early learning data system that aligns and is interoperable with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and that either data system--

- (a) Has all of the Essential Data Elements;**
- (b) Enables uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data Elements by Participating State Agencies and Participating Programs;**
- (c) Facilitates the exchange of data among Participating State Agencies by using standard data structures, data formats, and data definitions such as Common Education Data Standards to ensure interoperability among the various levels and types of data;**
- (d) Generates information that is timely, relevant, accessible, and easy for Early Learning and Development Programs and Early Childhood Educators to use for continuous improvement and decision making; and**
- (e) Meets the Data System Oversight Requirements and complies with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws.**

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

Past, Present, and Future: Implementing a High Quality Plan for Data Systems

Development and Use

Massachusetts has been a leader among states in recognizing the need for data-driven decision-making across state agencies responsible for ensuring children's healthy development, readiness for school, and success in school. Massachusetts already has a high quality plan in place to develop a comprehensive early learning data system and has embarked on an aggressive timetable for development. The Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant will enable the Commonwealth to accelerate this work and, hopefully, also collaborate with other states and the federal government in a peer network to further refine and use that system to improve programs and practice and achieve goals for children.

Massachusetts has decided that the strategy that suits its needs is to construct an Early Childhood Information System (ECIS) that is fully inter-operable with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), so that developments in both can move forward quickly, while other important data systems from health, child welfare, and other systems can be linked and made interoperable.

Governor Deval Patrick has charged state agencies to work collaboratively to this end and is playing an active role in developing the infrastructure to do so, both for the early learning years and the K-12 years.

Massachusetts' general law Chapter 15D, establishing the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), provides broad authority to plan for, fund, develop, deliver, regulate, and evaluate services and programs serving young children. As part of these responsibilities, EEC is provided the authority and responsibility to establish and maintain a comprehensive database of children, providers, and educators (that is, workforce). EEC is directed to collect, analyze and report on data obtained by measuring both child and program/service outcomes.

This statutory framework under Chapter 15D provides clear and sufficient authority to EEC to move forward in developing a comprehensive early childhood information system (ECIS),

incorporating all the essential data elements set out in the guidelines. The EEC Board and Commissioner Sherri Killins are charged with setting the direction and approving the requirements and outcomes of the ECIS initiative. Both within statute and through Gubernatorial, EEC Board and Commissioner leadership, Massachusetts has set out four broad uses for the data system:

- Providing policy makers with information about the current use of early learning and development programs that is capable of disaggregation to a local level and by different groupings of children (with a particular emphasis upon children with high needs), in order to identify service gaps and needs; track trends in addressing those gaps and needs over time; and identify combinations of best practices in engaging children in services that show positive early childhood outcomes, which can be used to inform further investment and systems improvement;
- Providing programs and services with information about the children they are serving and to improve individualized teaching and learning at the classroom and program level through formative assessment;
- Provide an opportunity for state agencies to understand where children may be served by multiple systems that would benefit from greater coordination and integration; and
- Provide parents/families with information about early learning and development programs available to them and giving them the information needed to support their children development. (See Appendix T for a more detailed enumeration of the goals and functions of the ECIS.)

On the technical side of data systems development, project management of the ECIS project is led by the Secretariat Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the Executive Office of Education (EOE) and the Chief Information Officer of EEC, with an Education Data System Advisory Group (EDSAG), chaired by the Secretariat CIO of EOE and comprised of the Commissioner's designees from EEC, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), and the Department of Higher Education (DHE), respectively, and the Secretary of Education's designee(s) from EOE, to ensure the cross-agency coordination that Governor Patrick has imposed upon these agencies. The EDSAG is responsible for:

- Securing MOUs and ISAs across agencies to ensure collaborative data sharing;
- Advising the Commissioners and the Secretary of Education on the administration and management of IT services related to the IT infrastructure to most efficiently and effectively meet the IT needs of the departments;
- Overseeing development and implementation of privacy, confidentiality and security safeguards concerning data reported to the departments and stored in the EOE IT infrastructure, so that such data are protected in accordance with applicable laws, Executive Order 504 and memoranda of agreement entered into by the parties; and
- Developing agreements and protocols pertaining to evaluation, research and other analysis of data so that the data is appropriately used for tracking, monitoring, and continuous improvement purposes.

On the nuts and bolts issues of system development and data use, an interagency **Data Advisory Working Group** is focused upon ensuring that the data system is developed in ways that ensure meeting three overarching goals—not only to collect and maintain a comprehensive data system, but to use it to improve policy and practice. The Working Group brings together representatives from state agencies, early education providers, and the legislature. State agencies participating as members of the Data Advisory Working Group include key holders of existing data on young children and their families and their multiple current legacy data systems:

- **The Department of Public Health (DPH)**, which collects public health information on children in the state. DPH holds data on birth records and the early intervention program, and is willing to share all data if parental consent is obtained.
- **The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)**, which collects information on children enrolled in assistance programs, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). DTA has expressed support for ECIS development as data sharing is invaluable to DTA's ability to provide quality services.
- **ESE**, which collects information in the Commonwealth's schools and districts. ESE has been supportive of the ECIS and is currently in the process of implementing the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grant.

- **The Department of Mental Health (DMH)**, which collects information on children accessing mental health services in the state. DMH has been an advocate of the coordination of state agencies in the hopes of better serving families and children.
- **The Department of Children and Families (DCF)**, which collects information on children at risk of abuse or neglect. DCF has supported the need for greater data sharing among the agencies serving the Commonwealth's children.
- **The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)**, which collects information on children accessing emergency assistance, shelters, public housing, and other housing stabilization programs. DHCD has emphasized the importance of establishing trust with parents to communicate benefits of the ECIS in supporting children and families.
- **DHE**, which collects information on students participating in institutions of higher education (IHEs) across the Commonwealth. DHE holds data on both the higher education outcomes of children and the early childhood workforce.

Based upon the overall goals for the data system, members of the **Data Advisory Working Group** are responsible for:

- Establishing agreement on the functionality of the ECIS, taking into consideration the unique benefits and challenges represented by each agency and provider;
- Establishing agreements around the development of unique identifiers or key indicators for matching across Massachusetts state agency data systems;
- Identifying needed fields of data to be shared in the ECIS;
- Identifying solutions to uphold privacy requirements of HIPAA and FERPA;
- Identifying a data-sharing process specific to young vulnerable children that allows coordinated case management and supports cross-agency service delivery to the child and family;
- Identifying strategies for communicating information about the ECIS to families and communities to increase outcomes for children through intentional and greater access to services; and
- Identifying the need for parental consent and/or regulatory authority in data collection.

Massachusetts has made use of CCDBG funding available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for the development of the ECIS, as well as for further implementing the SLDS. The funding from the RTT-ELC will be critical in helping Massachusetts to accelerate this work.

The following describes how each of the specific data requirements will be met:

a)

ECIS has been collaboratively designed to include all of the necessary and essential data elements required of an early learning data system that will improve instruction, practices, and services for early education programs, educators, and families including the Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) (See: (E)(1)). ECIS is set up to adhere to the Common Education Data Standards (CEDS) and their corresponding Early Education Data Elements. The initial version of ECIS will use all the data elements currently available within the information systems of EEC. Over time the system will be expanded to include other essential data elements to meet additional mid and long-term milestones and be linked across the Commonwealth's SLDS and P-20 System. ECIS is not a one-time investment but a critical infrastructure that will require maintenance and enhancements to meet the demands of a growing educational support base for a robust data structure. The following critical data elements broadly assist in providing a coordinated interagency approach to sharing data:

- a. A unique statewide child identifier or another highly accurate, proven method to link data on that child, including KEA data, to and from the SLDS and the coordinated early learning data system (if applicable)
- b. A unique statewide Early Childhood Educator identifier
- c. A unique program site identifier
- d. Child and family demographic information
- e. Early Childhood Educator demographic information, including data on educational attainment and state credential or licenses held, as well as professional development information

- f. Program-level data on the program's structure, quality, child suspension and length of time in programs, rates, staff retention, staff compensation, work environment, and all applicable data reported as part of the state's tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (tiered QRIS)
- g. Child-level program participation and attendance data.

Massachusetts will seek to be as comprehensive as possible in collecting and using demographic information about children and educators, recognizing the importance of being able to examine information by important child groupings, particularly factors that identify children with high needs. Child and family demographic information will include gender, race/ethnicity, age, language, income status (at least as measured by eligibility for participation in the FRM program or child care subsidy eligibility), English language learner status, presence of an IEP (all available through the SLDS, which will be interoperable with ECIS), and other information that Massachusetts can collect from other sources (such as demographic information collected in early childhood learning and development programs and in other service systems) with parental consent. Early childhood educator demographic information will include gender, race/ethnicity, age, educational attainment, languages in which the teacher can speak, and years of experience in the field, in order to look at the workforce in the context of its credentials, experience, and the degree to which it reflects the cultural and linguistic diversity in the demographics of the children and families it serves.

b)

This not only is a requirement of the RTT-ELC grant, but it also is part of the statutory responsibility and authority within the ECIS. Massachusetts has made great strides already in reviewing the different legacy systems within state agencies and developing MOUs and ISAs across them. This work will be accelerated with the RTT-ELC grant. Within the first year of award of grant funding, the initial version of ECIS will be launched, linking together all EEC legacy systems. Also in the first year, web portals for family and provider entry of assessment data and initial reporting will be accomplished. The second year of system development will allow for increased level of reporting on use of formative assessments and early warning child indicators, as well as automated messaging functionality to reach out proactively and engage

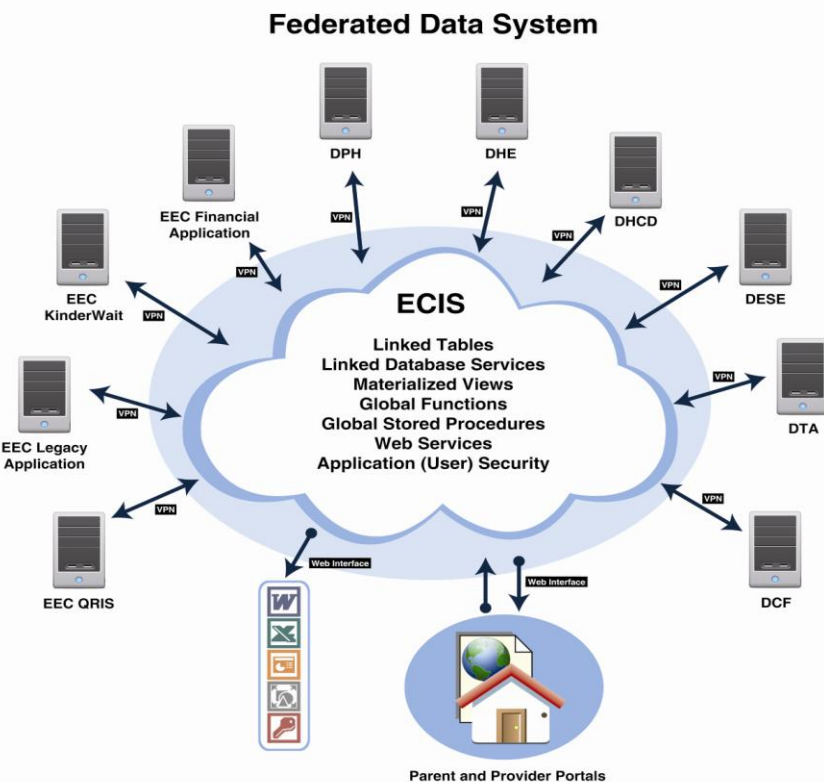
parents and providers. The current work schedule and time line for achieving specific aspects of this work plan are described more fully in Appendix U.

c)

The advisory group structure for the ECIS that includes both content experts and technical experts in overseeing and implementing the work is essential to developing the very detailed specifications for exchanging data and integrating diverse data from different systems in a way that creates meaningful and useable information. All of these issues are ones that the advisory group either has acted upon or has fit into its work plan. Appendix V provides more detailed information on the progress of this work.

d)

Through its work to date, Massachusetts has recognized that leadership, support, and understanding is needed from multiple stakeholders – policy makers, administrators, program implementers, data system developers, and frontline practitioners – to develop the ECIS so that it provides information that informs early learning systems development. This requires a process in which all stakeholders become invested in and have strong commitment to data system development and use. First, Massachusetts has identified the data that is currently available within its systems (see Appendix W for descriptions). Next, to use this information and to achieve ownership, Massachusetts has worked to describe the specific ways that the information can, in fact, be used at three levels to improve policy and practice (policy maker, program, and family/parent).



Massachusetts has identified a number of questions that a timely, relevant, accessible, and user-friendly system will answer so that stakeholders will benefit in their use for continuous improvement. These have been developed with particular attention to how children with high needs and the families/parents of those children can benefit, and early learning and development programs and early childhood educators can use information to improve their practice and decision-making. The EEC Board, Advisory Committees, and other stakeholders are being enlisted to further develop these questions. These are provided in Appendix X and Y.

Finally, part of Massachusetts' strategy is to make the information, with appropriate confidentiality provisions, available to researchers and evaluators to be able to fully mine the data to answer important questions in Massachusetts' work to develop a high quality early learning system. Even with the investments made within Massachusetts on data systems development, report development, and analysis, and with funding available through this grant, the ECIS system will not be fully used unless more stakeholders see its value and use it to answer important research and evaluation questions.

e)

From the outset, ECIS has been committed to the adherence of transparent privacy protection and security practices and policies. EDSAG is charged with creating guidelines and policies that address privacy issues and concerns. Additionally the MOUs that EDSAG is developing across the state will establish the process for granting permissions to access data in a manner that supports security and privacy guidelines as well as meet the Data Systems Oversight Requirements. Another focus of EDSAG will be to address the need for differentiation in user access to ECIS information, within the context of both aggregate and child-specific information and establishment of system ownership and maintenance responsibility.

Conclusion

Like most states, Massachusetts has a number of legacy data systems that have their independent information on programs, practitioners, and young children that are the subject to serve. Through its work to date, Massachusetts has been able to develop, and begin implementing, a high quality plan to strengthen these systems and build interoperability among them, with a

specific focus upon the Early Childhood Information System. This grant will ensure Massachusetts accelerates its activities. The key to Massachusetts' success to date has been a commitment to data-driven policy development and the ability to retain an emphasis in data systems development on defining and answering questions with that data that will result in higher quality services and better outcomes for children, with a particular focus on children with high needs.

Priority 2: Competitive Preference Priority – Including all Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. (10 points)

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015—

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and

(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

*Massachusetts plans to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State's licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed (or license-exempt) participate (Universal tiered QRIS Participation). The tiered QRIS is currently a partially voluntary system with an estimated 15%-20% of licensed programs in the state participating. Section (B)(2) describes the state's plan to increase the participation of all programs receiving public funding to 100%. However, Priority 2 will address the state's plan to have *Universal Tiered QRIS Participation* of all licensed/license-exempt programs.*

(a) EEC in its capacity as a licensing agency, issues licenses and inspects all early education and care programs in Massachusetts. EEC enforces strong licensing standards for the health, safety and education of all children in early education and care. The licensing system covers Family Child Care (FCC), Small Group and School-Age Child Care Programs, and Large Group and School-Age Child Care Programs, described as follows:⁹²

- Family Child Care (FCC): Care for two or more unrelated children for a fee, on a regular basis in a provider's home setting.
- Small Group and School-Age Child Care Programs: Care for 10 or fewer unrelated children on a regular basis in a center or building that is not provider's home. Small Group and School Age programs could operate like a preschool program, before and/or after school program or family child care program as the requirements allow for a multi-age group of children.
- Large Group and School-Age Child Care Programs: Care for 11 or more unrelated children on a regular basis in a center or building. Many different types of early education and care programs are licensed within this category, such as those commonly known as; early education and care centers, child care centers, day care centers, nursery schools, preschools, child development programs, school age child care programs and before and after school programs.

In Massachusetts, a license is required to provide most child care services. In some circumstances, the caring arrangement may be exempt from licensure and may not require a license. If a program is exempt from licensure, the Application for Child Care Licensing Exemption must be completed and submitted to the EEC Regional Office for approval. The program is not exempt from licensing unless EEC approval has been granted. Additionally, Section (B) addresses what qualifies as license-exempt programs and their participation in the tiered QRIS.

⁹² Massachusetts EEC Licensing information is retrieved from:
<http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=edusubtopic&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Pre+K+-+Grade+12&L2=Early+Education+and+Care&L3=Licensing&L4=Family%2c+Large+%26+Small+Group%2c+and+School-Age+Child+Care+Licensing&sid=Eoedu>

(b) The state's high quality plan, which EEC will implement by June 30, 2015, is described as follows. In order to meet the goal of *Universal Tiered QRIS Participation*, the state plans to undertake a series of efforts lead by EEC: 1) a study resulting in data driven recommendations, 2) raising awareness and public process, and 3) EEC's implementation of policies/programs focused on achieving *Universal Tiered QRIS Participation*.

1. The Study

The study will be an empirical analysis of the ways in which EEC can facilitate full participation from licensed programs in the tiered QRIS. EEC plans to engage an outside research agency to carry out the study described below by 2013. This two-part survey and interview study will help answer the following broad questions:

- How can EEC best motivate programs to participate in the tiered QRIS? How can currently available resources help meet this goal?
- What barriers do programs perceive in participating in the tiered QRIS? How can EEC help programs to address these barriers?
- What is preventing programs required to participate from participating?
- How can EEC best disseminate information about tiered QRIS participation?
- How can we leverage community resources to engender a culture of early education that promotes tiered QRIS participation?

Data Collection and Survey Participants. Data will be collected in two ways. First, all EEC-licensed programs (center-based, family-based, out-of-school-time-based) will be invited to participate in an internet survey asking about their awareness of the state's tiered QRIS and their thoughts about participation. Because internet surveys are easy to administer on a large scale, and because this particular survey will be relatively short and simple, it is not unfeasible to invite all licensed programs to participate.

A sub-sample of licensed programs will then be identified to participate in semi-structured qualitative interviews. In order to get as complete a picture of the perspective of programs in the state, the sampling methodology will account for geographic location and program type (e.g., center-based, family-based, out-of-school-time-based). Additionally, three categories of programs will be sampled: programs currently participating in the tiered QRIS, programs not required to participate, and programs required to participate but not currently participating. The latter groups will be oversampled given their knowledge of the tiered QRIS and simultaneous lack of required participation. It is hypothesized that this group will provide especially valuable information regarding the ways in which the state can best support programs to participate in the tiered QRIS, given that they have not yet been responsive to the current communication and requirements the state has made. In total, approximately 25-50 program directors will be interviewed.

Analysis and Recommendations. Survey data will be compiled and analyzed and interviews will be audio-taped, transcribed, and coded for common themes. The study will give the state quantitative information regarding the perspective of licensed/license-exempt programs in the state vis-à-vis the state's tiered QRIS. This study will provide valuable information and recommendations to the state to help increase program participation to cover all licensed and license-exempt programs. Additionally, if the state deems useful, the study could be repeated with a smaller and more specific scope. Such an ongoing practice can provide feedback to EEC regarding how best to support program participation as the climate and culture around the tiered QRIS continues to evolve.

2. Raising Awareness and Public Process

Once EEC receives data and recommendations to inform its decision-making, EEC will raise awareness and engage in a public process beginning in July 2012, which will be facilitated through the six EPS grant recipients, Child Care Resources and Referral Centers and the six Readiness Centers across the state. The raising awareness campaign will include media messages, online and direct courses, and communications with providers. Additionally, EEC will engage the public - providers, educators, stakeholders, private sector - through a series of 12

public meetings hosted by the EEC Commissioner to discuss the recommendations and to gather information for EEC's potential policies/programs.

3. EEC's Implementation of Policies and Programs

By July 2013, EEC will incorporate the study, recommendations, and public input into its decision-making on policies, programs, and funding to increase the number of programs participating to 100% of licensed/license-exempt programs. EEC will release its new policies or programs by December 2013, which beginning on June 30, 2014 will require all licensed/license-exempt to participate in the tiered QRIS. The state will link the licensing database and tiered QRIS by June 2014 to passively enroll all licensed programs in Level 1 and then use its policies and programs to encourage providers to actively apply for higher levels. This may require a regulation change.

Priority 3: Competitive Preference Priority – Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry. (10 points)

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or

(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

Specify which option the State is taking:

☐ (a) Applicant has indicated in Table (A)(1)-12 that all of selection criterion (E)(1) elements are met.

☒ (b) Applicant has written to selection criterion (E)(1).

Priority 4: Invitational Priority – Sustaining Program Effects in the Early Elementary Grades.

The Departments are particularly interested in applications that describe the State's High-Quality Plan to sustain and build upon improved early learning outcomes throughout the early elementary school years, including by--

- (a) Enhancing the State's current standards for kindergarten through grade 3 to align them with the Early Learning and Development Standards across all Essential Domains of School Readiness;**
- (b) Ensuring that transition planning occurs for children moving from Early Learning and Development Programs to elementary schools;**
- (c) Promoting health and family engagement, including in the early grades;**
- (d) Increasing the percentage of children who are able to read and do mathematics at grade level by the end of the third grade; and**
- (e) Leveraging existing Federal, State, and local resources, including but not limited to funds received under Title I and Title II of ESEA, as amended, and IDEA.**

Massachusetts's early learning and development system is designed to sustain and build upon early learning outcomes throughout the early elementary school years - *smoothing the path from birth to grade three*. Informed by evidenced based research, Massachusetts has embraced birth to third grade alignment as a comprehensive strategy that seeks to improve young children's access to high quality birth to 5 programs and strengthens the capacity of elementary schools to sustain student learning gains in the early elementary school years. By integrating these two efforts the state aims to enable the children to be proficient in reading and math, and to develop the social and emotional skills that support academic success by the end of third grade.

Over the next four years, the state plans to dedicate \$4 million to sustaining early learning program effects in the early elementary grades—building on the successful practices already in place around a statewide aligned literacy strategy from birth to third grade. The following sections will describe the state's high quality plan, which focuses on alignment of birth to third

grade across multiple domains. The state's goal is to have a fully aligned system, which includes the following components:⁹³

- Mechanisms for cross-sector alignment (Governance, strategic plans)
- Administrators and Leadership Quality (Leadership is inclusive/facilitative and focused on instruction)
- Teacher Quality and Capacity (Focus on credentials and professional development; professional dispositions; professional community)
- Instructional Tools and Practices (Curriculum content; alignment of standards and curricula; pedagogical methods)
- Instructional Environment (Student-centered learning culture (classroom and school))
- Data and Assessments (Data and assessment used to improve instruction)
- Engaged Families (Families and communities engaged in student learning)
- Transitions and Pathways (Focus on children's movement through the continuum)

(a) The Commonwealth has built our system of early learning and development standards on a birth to grade three continuum that hones in all essential domains of school readiness. Not only is Massachusetts investing in multiple components of the overall system to improve quality and child outcomes, but also we are aligning the specific steps in a child's educational pathway from birth through third grade. The Commonwealth is doing this by creating a system that ranges from the adoption of the *Infant/Toddler Learning Guidelines*, *Guidelines for Preschool Early Learning Experiences* and the *Pre-K Common Core Standards* (also known as the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Mathematics and English/Language Arts*) to partnering with community based early childhood providers and educators and schools through shared understanding and practice with regard to screening and assessments, engaging families on a comprehensive level, and facilitating high quality joint professional development ultimately leading to school preparedness—all of which are geared toward success on state assessments by third grade.

93 Kauerz, K. (2011). Sustaining your work: PreK-3rd implementation and evaluation framework. Presentation at the meeting of ESE PK-3 grantees. Harvard University: Cambridge, MA

(b)

Massachusetts plans to ensure that transition planning occurs for children moving from early learning and development programs to elementary schools. Gains made in high quality early childhood programs will quickly be lost if we do not substantially alter the educational experience for students in kindergarten and beyond. Data from the Boston Public Schools indicates that students who experience high quality preschool demonstrate significant and substantial gains in vocabulary, math, executive functioning and self-regulation. Furthermore, these gains last well beyond Pre-K. Follow-up data indicate that children's early education gains diminish starting at Kindergarten. This academic loss is unnecessary and through this plan EEC is focused on sustaining early learning gains through a seamless transition to the early elementary years including a focus on summer learning and afterschool alignment.

In order to ensure that transition planning occurs for children moving from early learning and development programs to elementary schools, Massachusetts is focusing on building and enhancing partnerships between community early education, school-age programs and public schools to ensure alignment of curriculum, assessment, professional development and transitions for children and their families. To begin with, through the RTTT-ELC grant, EEC plans to collaborate with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to link the work being done in public schools to maximize the investment in our children, including extending the wrap-around zone concept to birth. To sustain early learning program effects in the early elementary grades, EEC, in partnership with ESE, proposes the following strategies: targeted support to high need school districts; supporting effective transitions; family engagement, expanding access to comprehensive community based services, data and assessments; and communications and raising awareness.

State Aid to School Districts and Community Based Providers. EEC and ESE plan to administer funds to local school districts that are ready to create sustained strategies to improve the educational experience for students birth to Kindergarten and beyond. EEC already has begun to establish partnerships with public schools who partner with community based providers including Head Start, family child care and centers to support Pre-K to third grade alignment. These partnerships will build off the 2007 Head Start memorandum of understanding

requirements with public schools. The scope of work these partnerships plan to accomplish from 2012 -2013 is described here.

EEC Responsibilities and Scope of Work.

- Coordinate the leadership of the public school Pre-K to Third Grade Pilot and host four (4) meetings of this group per year.
- Make available to early education and child care providers information regarding the tiered QRIS and other professional development activities.
- Partner with the public schools to ensure that providers in the mixed delivery system have access to the information necessary to assist in creating an efficient, family-friendly kindergarten registration process for parents and children.
- Work to ensure school age and out of school time program alignment with the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks/Pre-K Common Core*.
- Work with ESE to facilitate the assigning of unique student identifying numbers to children participating in community based preschool.
- Coordinate with ESE to ensure alignment of priorities regarding Pre-K to 3rd Grade system building.
- Work to increase parent involvement in their child(ren)'s education through the community engagement program by incorporating the five *Strengthening Families* protective factors listed below:
 - *Social and emotional development through nurturing and attachment*- Building a close bond helps parents better understand, respond to and communicate with their children.
 - *Knowledge of parenting and of child and youth development*- Parents learn what to look for at each age and how to help their children reach their full potential.
 - *Parental resilience*-Recognizing the signs of stress and enhancing problem-solving skills can help parents build their capacity to cope.
 - *Social connections*- Parents with an extensive network of family, friends, and neighbors have better support in times of need.

- *Concrete supports for parents-* Caregivers with access to financial, housing, and other concrete resources and services that help them meet their basic needs can better attend to their role as parents.
- Help coordinate better connections between preschools, public schools, and school-age programs.
- Develop a methodology to promote alignment of goals between public and private early education and care programs to better influence instructional learning practices across all settings through work with the Educator Provider Support (EPS) grantees.
- Work with area pediatricians to enlist their support in the *Reach Out and Read* Program.
- Work with the local libraries to ensure they are a bridge between public school and the early education and care mixed delivery system.
- Develop a tool to communicate with the mixed delivery system of early educators.
- Encourage EEC-licensed providers and EEC partners to:
 - Use the *Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences* and evidence based assessment accompanied with a career plan for all staff.
 - Participate in at least four coaching, training or learning opportunities regarding alignment of standards, curriculum, assessment, early literacy, instructional leadership, and family involvement.
 - Commit time, staff and shared resources to help facilitate the full alignment of the Pre-K to Third Grade initiative in a mixed delivery system.
 - Participate in a comprehensive assessment (screening, formative assessment, program environmental quality and norm referenced assessments) to measure growth at multiple points for both the program/environment and student growth for children preschool to second grade.
 - Share this opportunity with parents and encourage them to sign the consent for the Early Childhood Information System (ECIS).
 - Support activities that have children register for Kindergarten.
 - Be the primary support for providing anticipatory guidance to families in the development of early literacy skills.
 - Commit to enrolling programs in tiered QRIS and writing a plan that details barriers to participation in tiered QRIS.

The Public School Responsibilities and Scope of Work.

- Assist in the assigning of student identifiers to all public school children in this pilot.
- Explore and implement best practices to enhance the kindergarten registration process for incoming children and families by ensuring that the early education and care mixed delivery system is included in the design of the improved processes.
- Work to engage parents as partners in their child's early educational experience.
- Utilize state supported screening, formative assessment and environmental quality to measure growth in children Pre-K to 2nd grade.
- Work with EEC school-age providers to improve transitions to a continuum of learning, communications, and the sharing of children's information, to the extent permitted by law and in accordance with FERPA and the Massachusetts student records laws.
- Administer, to the extent permitted by law or otherwise, this project in collaboration with other relevant initiatives and grant programs, such as the Quality Full-Day Kindergarten Grant, the Early Childhood Special Education Consolidation Grant, and the Pre-K – 3rd grade Curriculum and Instruction program.

In addition, EEC and the Public Schools plan to:

- Encourage the use of the *Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences*, including online courses, EEC's online literacy course from birth to 3rd grade, when made available, and the *Guide to Kindergarten Learning Experiences*, developed by ESE, in order to align learning experiences across multiple settings, so children get a similar learning experience before entering Kindergarten.
- Monitor family mobility and program participation Pre-K to 3rd as a developmental risk to educational success.
- Develop a plan to share information, to the extent permitted by law, regarding professional development and/or training opportunities for early educators.
- Share information as part of the ECIS to the extent permitted by law regarding comprehensive developmental and health teams for children in all settings.
- Coordinate better transitions and connections between Pre-K programs and school programs.
- Promote better coordination and connections between public schools and school-age programs.

- Promote mentoring/coaching between public and private entities to better influence instructional learning practices.
- Work on best practices for family engagement using the *Strengthening Families* framework.
- Develop a shared practice and effort around the development of early literacy skills from Pre-k through 3rd grade.
- Develop methods to support children and families to manage transitions with a frame of child development that supports a continuum of learning and family engagement.
- Create a local process for planning, and monitoring the outcomes of this agreement and the engagement, growth and development of children birth to 8 and their families.

Supporting Effective Transitions. To ease children’s transition from one setting to the next, the public schools and private early learning and development providers will collaborate on curriculum, professional development and assessments. An important step the state has taken to facilitate this collaboration is its inclusion of pre-K in the adoption of the *Pre-K Common Core Standards*, in addition to the *Guidelines for Preschool Early Learning Experiences* and the *Infant/Toddler Learning Guidelines*. Additionally, the state plans to replicate partnerships such as the signing of a model memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Pre-K to 3rd grade alignment between Springfield Public Schools and EEC. As a result of this partnership, early educators, public school teachers and administrators work together to meet the needs of high needs children in the community, including creating a “warm hand off” between the school and community based providers. For example, the public school adopted the same formative assessment that provides a foundation for shared professional development and transitions conversations. Close collaboration and learning across the community has been fostered by early and elementary educators participating together in trainings focused on sustaining and building upon improved outcomes from early learning throughout the early elementary school years.

Other programs with which EEC will partner to support students’ transition from early learning programs to early elementary school include, the state’s Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant recipients, who are experienced at family engagement, and Boston’s

Countdown to Kindergarten.⁹⁴ Partnering with *Countdown*, EEC will work with CFCE recipients to adopt the program's activities in their community ranging from home activities, such as *Talk, Read, Play*; school and community-based *Play to Learn Groups*; community welcome to kindergarten sessions; and specific curriculum guides for their district's kindergarten classrooms.

Data and Assessments. The Commonwealth believes that strong data and assessments of children are also key components to transition planning. As we described in section (C)(2), our Comprehensive Assessments System measures levels of growth for a child from Pre-K through 2nd grade. The information gathered from screenings and assessments will travel based on parental consent with the state or local community programs and schools with a child from the point in which they enter an early learning and development program and is shared with public schools upon the child's entry into Kindergarten, where the child will have a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA). The information gathered will be recorded in the ECIS, (described in section (E)(2)) and represents a horizontal information system, which shares data across all the social service agencies providing for a child. The ECIS will be linked with the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), which represents a vertical information system sharing the data up through the grades. Additionally, the tiered QRIS, which measures quality of early learning and development programs will be cross-walked with the K-2 monitoring requirements implemented by ESE to determine if there is additional alignment necessary for K-2 classroom environments.

Communications and Raising Awareness. Secretary of Education Paul Reville, EEC Commissioner Sherri Killins and ESE Commissioner Mitchell Chester will lead the communication charge to superintendents, private donors, and educational stakeholders on the importance of early childhood principals in the public school system. Additionally, EEC plans to continue to host *Communities of Practice* meetings held in each regional office to address early intervention to the public school transition, the importance of family engagement, supports for high needs children and English learners. Also, EEC and ESE plan to conduct regional community meetings on early childhood topics and services in order to help strengthen

94 Countdown to Kindergarten Boston (2009). Retrieved from www.countdowntokindergarten.org.

collaborative relationships between Head Start, community based programs and public schools. These relationships and common language and the understanding of early childhood topics and services will help ensure a smooth transition for children and families into Kindergarten

(c) Healthy interactive relationships with adult caregivers in the family and community shape the architecture of children's brains, an investment that is paid back through a lifetime of productivity. Massachusetts understands that families are the most influential individuals in a child's development, and considers them partners in improving how we support that development. As a result, the state's planned partnerships with public schools described above will be influential in engaging families to help sustain and build upon improved early learning outcomes throughout the early elementary school years. Additionally, the state has several programs to support health promotion and family engagement such as: *the Help Me Grow* model, which uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) to educate families about child development, *The Massachusetts Children at Play Initiative*, developed by EEC, DPH, Head Start, and ESE's Child and Adult Food Program to respond to the growing trend of childhood obesity in the state; a family education and support program for providing a variety of services, (playgroups, home visits, developmental screenings, adult and family education, parent support groups, family literacy activities).

Additionally, Massachusetts' long-term commitment and attention to community and family engagement has produced a number of successful family-community partnerships that have demonstrated high potential for reaching high needs families and connecting them to community resources. Among these, a comprehensive intergenerational family literacy initiative known as *PACT (Parent and Child Together Time)* in Lynn, *Thrive in Five* in Boston, and Springfield's *Reading Success by 4th Grade Initiative (RS4G)*. Our plan calls for EEC to spend \$4 million over four years of the RTT-ELC grant to identify the core elements that have made these projects successful and design a plan to expand them to the 17 high need communities and at least 10 additional rural communities by FY 2014. By targeting the organizations who receive CFCE grants and tapping our inter-agency partners, these family-community partnerships will be a resource for promoting health and family engagement (through local governance) focused on the transition from early learning through the early elementary grades.

(d) Massachusetts plans to increase the percentage of children who are able to read and do mathematics at grade level by the end of third grade. EEC's planned Pre-K to Third Grade Pilot partnerships with public schools, described above, will directly support this goal.

(e) Massachusetts will leverage existing federal, state, and local resources, including but not limited to funds received under Title I and Title II of ESEA, as amended, and IDEA as appropriate, in order to invest in the Commonwealth's birth through grade three approach, which will sustain and build upon improved early learning outcomes throughout the early elementary school years through aligned standards, a comprehensive assessments system, family engagement, and professional development.

Priority 5: Invitational Priority – Encouraging Private-Sector Support

The Departments are particularly interested in applications that describe how the private sector will provide financial and other resources to support the State and its Participating State Agencies or Participating Programs in the implementation of the State Plan.

Since the creation of the EEC, Massachusetts has partnered with the private sector in bringing about statewide recognition of early learning as integral to closing the achievement gap. The Commonwealth, fortunate to have a robust and pro-active private sector, will continue to rely on our highly respected institutes of higher education (IHEs), philanthropy organizations, business, and non-profit organizations in implementing the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**. The private sector will provide financial, in-kind support and their wealth of other resources (faculty, subject matter experts, community networks etc.) to support the state in **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan** implementation. In particular the private sector's efforts are committed and aligned with the state's **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**, as evidenced in the abundance of letters of support in Appendix LL. The private sector support principally falls into the following four categories: 1) Research, Innovation, and Expertise; 2) Evaluations, Knowledge, Skills; 3) Communications; and 4) Business Leadership.

1) Research, Innovation, and Expertise. IHEs in Massachusetts in particular are world-renowned sources from which we draw upon for their research, innovation and expertise on early learning and development. As the state implements the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**, EEC plans to continue these valuable partnerships with IHEs while fostering new ones. Examples of the support include but are not limited to; the number of representatives from IHEs serving on advisory committees for the state that focus on innovative and creative solutions for early learning reform. For example, such committees include the *Early Education and Care and Out-of-School Time Workforce Development Task Force* and the state Readiness Centers. Additionally, IHEs serve as partners in designing assessments, primary evaluators of the effectiveness of the state's programs, providers of professional development, and designers of pilot studies such as the *Springfield Reading Success by 4th Grade Campaign*.

Additionally, the state plans to partner with an IHE to design and provide a paraprofessionals' course focused on training trainers for professional development in English Language Development and STEM, an investment in sustaining quality professional development. The state will partner with IHEs to support our birth to 3rd grade literacy and STEM strategy by developing courses, which are aligned and focus on evidence-based activity across early learning, community based programs, family and public school environments. Also, the state plans to partner with IHEs to design a common metric for our Kindergarten Entry Assessment, to design a clear and accessible logic model to validate the tiered QRIS.

2) Evaluations, Knowledge, Skills. The private sector has played an important role in spearheading campaigns and ideas to improve the quality and effectiveness of our state's early learning and development programs, our workforce, the tiered QRIS, and our outreach to the community. As the state implements the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**, EEC plans to continue its valuable partnerships and build new ones. Examples of these public-private partnerships include but are not limited to the following organizations. The Bessie Tarrt Wilson Initiative for Children has led the *Early Education and Care and Out-of-School Time Workforce Development Task Force* and supported EEC in finding innovative solutions to the early educator compensation issue (See (D)(2)). Also in FY11, EEC funded an innovative cross-sector partnership, *Together for Quality (T4Q)* with Wheelock College, the United Way of MassBay

and the Community Advocates for Young Learners (CAYL) Institute to support and strengthen the capacity of early education and out of school time program leaders. *T4Q* focuses on helping programs identify, prioritize, and implement improvements that support advancement in the tiered QRIS through trainings and coaching. Currently, the state has plans underway to work with the Boston's Children's Museum and Libraries to develop community engagement programs focused on the hard to reach children and families as well as many other beneficial and educational features. (See (C)(4)).

Also, as we implement the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**, EEC plans to strengthen and broaden its collaboration and partnership with several community-based organizations such as the Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs and United Ways of Massachusetts. The Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs supports EEC's work in family engagement, collaborations with schools, the tiered QRIS, and leverages private funds to lend additional focus on this work. The YMCAs, as early participants in the tiered QRIS, serve as models for other entities—with their 32 YMCAs participating in the tiered QRIS and all with plans to advance their level of program quality. The state's 32 YMCAs provide a full spectrum of services to children and families and recently were able to raise over \$7 million dollars in our communities to support programs serving children, families and youth.

Also, EEC plans to strengthen and broaden its collaboration and partnership with several philanthropic organizations such as the Barr Foundation and the Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation, which have been making investments in early education for decades and are committed to the state's plan to close the school readiness gap.

3) Communications. Massachusetts' public-private partnerships have supported the state in effective communication strategies on the community level, focusing mainly on engaging families and the public. As the state implements the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**, EEC plans to continue its valuable communications partnerships and initiate new ones. Examples of these partnerships include but are not limited to: United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley and the EEC's current television public awareness campaign *Brain Building in Progress*, which is drawing attention to the importance of investing in young children. (See

(C)((4).) Additionally, the Commonwealth plans to implement an innovative method to engage families in healthy, age-appropriate early learning and development practices by partnering with Boston-based WGBH, public television’s premier educational media developer. (See (C)(4) and (D)(2)).) WGBH plans to create a “Digital Hub” of media based tools specifically designed for use by and with parents of children ages 0-5 as well as provide a number of resources and materials for early educators.

4) Business Leadership. EEC is reaching out to the business sector to form new public-private partnerships to focus on solutions, resources, and contributions businesses can make to support high quality early education and assist in the implementation of the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**. The 2011 National Business Summit on Early Childhood Investment was a landmark first step in convening business leaders and the early learning field to focus on innovative solutions and contributions businesses can make to support high quality early education. The summit drew attendees nationwide—from 34 states—to Boston this past summer to share experiences and commit themselves to advocate for high-quality early education. The conference featured a keynote address by Dr. Jack Shonkoff, the pediatrician who directs the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. After outlining the scientific case for investing in young children, Shonkoff pressed for new ways to address children’s issues holistically, rather than in separate silos such as health, education and economic development. He said a business perspective could help in the search for new ways to bring effective, sustainable interventions to scale. “The private sector,” he said, “knows and understands and lives and breathes innovation.”

As a follow up to the summit, the United Way of Mass Bay, the Barr Foundation, the Massachusetts Business Round Table, Early Education for All and the Bessie Tarrt Wilson Initiative for Children will be convening Massachusetts’ business leaders on November 1, 2011. The purpose of the meeting, which is being hosted by Citizens Bank, is to cultivate a core group of business leaders in Massachusetts who will engage as “children's champions” to build awareness among their peers and to advocate for and invest in Massachusetts's youngest citizens.

BUDGET – Part I: Summary

OVERALL STATEWIDE BUDGET					
Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	1,213,295	1,213,295	1,213,295	1,167,292	4,807,176
2. Fringe Benefits	423,682	423,682	423,682	407,618	1,678,666
3. Travel	18,725	18,725	18,725	18,725	74,900
4. Equipment	30,400	3,400	3,400	20,400	57,600
5. Supplies	540,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	555,000
6. Contractual	11,606,969	10,390,355	9,017,897	7,805,557	38,820,777
7. Training Stipends	457,500	407,500	282,500	282,500	1,430,000
8. Other	0	0	0	0	0
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	14,290,571	12,461,957	10,964,499	9,707,092	47,424,119
10. Indirect Costs*	671,867	586,983	433,986	383,044	2,075,881
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners	0	0	0	0	0
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	125,000	125,000	125,000	125,000	500,000
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	15,087,438	13,173,941	11,523,485	10,215,136	50,000,000
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	0	0	0	0	0
15. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 13-14)	15,087,438	13,173,941	11,523,485	10,215,136	50,000,000

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.

Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all grant years.

Line 6: Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.

Line 10: If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.

Line 11: Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through contracts, interagency agreements, MOUs or any other subawards allowable under State procurement law. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

Line 12: The State must set aside \$400,000 from its grant funds for the purpose of participating in RTT–ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated to Participating State Agencies evenly across the four years of the grant.

Budget Part II - Narrative (also responds to A(4) (b))

Our budget for the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan** is based on a set of priorities outlined in the high quality plans described throughout this application. As described in (A)(4)(a) and (c), we have selected our funding priorities based on their potential to effectively build off current investments and infrastructure to maximize sustainability beyond 2016. Specifically, we have focused our proposed expenditures on 1) **larger, short-term or one-time costs** that will bring successful policies and programs to scale (such as Tiered QRIS training) or create essential infrastructure for new programs (such as our ECIS data system, assessment materials, our coaching and mentoring model, and validation studies); and 2) a secondary focus on **developing knowledge and sharing information** (such as seed money for model programs, expanding training and professional development opportunities, and building community capacity).

Below is a list of each participating state agency, including a brief description of its budgetary and project responsibilities. For further description of these, see MOUs in Appendices Z-KK or summary of the MOUs in (A)(3).

Department of Early Education and Care (EEC): As the lead agency responsible for implementing the high quality plans detailed throughout this application, EEC will work with its partners at other participating state agencies and the private sector to implement action on the state's eight high quality plans for: Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, Family and Community Engagement, Workforce Development, Kindergarten Entry Assessment, and Early Learning Data Systems.

State Department of Public Health: The state will direct \$2.5 million to DPH over four years (\$615,000/year). This budget will support the hiring of one EEC Clinical Health and one Mental Health Specialist to embed health guidance for families with high-needs children in multiple programmatic systems via staff training, training on medication administration, data sharing and aligning programmatic and staff resources that can benefit young, high needs children.

Department of Children and Families: The state will spend \$600,000 over four years to educate DCF staff about the availability of early childhood education programs to families receiving DCF services, such as domestic violence shelters.

Department of Mental Health: The state will direct approximately \$1.5 million to DMH over four years to work with EEC to hire one full-time specialist in early childhood mental health, and one-part-time child psychiatrist. The agencies will collaborate on the *Statewide Community Crisis Intervention Project*, the *Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Project*, and establishing links between EEC's CFCE grantees and DMH's *Parent Support Groups* for parents of children with mental illness.

Office for Refugees and Immigrants: In a key part of our high quality plan for family engagement, the state will invest about \$345,000 over four years to hire an Early Education and Care Liaison and execute plans to increase two-way communication between the early education and care community and programs serving immigrant and refugee families (See: (C)(4)).

Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD): We intend to direct \$200,000 over four years to DHCD to better collaborate on efforts to provide services to homeless families (See: (A)(3)).

The above investments do not include important contributions by our other participating state agencies—Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Higher Education, the Children's Trust Fund, and the Department of Transitional Assistance—which will be funded by existing investments as described in (A)(3)(a). Given that our proposed investments here seek to build from existing funds and infrastructure investments, we feel confident that together, we have designed a financial plan to efficiently and thoroughly carry out our agenda. Our projected costs are market-based estimates consistent with our geographic area, proportionate scale-up of existing programs and activities, and conversations between the state agencies specific to this grant proposal. We believe they are reasonable and will provide us with the valuable resources to launch the next phase of our state's ambitious early learning agenda.

Below is a list of the specific projects carried out by both public and private sector partners, including descriptions of how these projects, when taken together, will result in full implementation of the **Massachusetts Early Learning Plan**. The selection criteria that each project addresses are noted at the top of each Project Category. Our plan and budget also calls for

the creation of eight positions within EEC (i.e. the lead agency) to manage different aspects of this grant that align with our high quality plans and overall grant management responsibilities (See: (A)(3)) and Appendices C, D and E). A RTTT-ELC Project Manager and a RTTT-ELC Fiscal Manager will report directly to the EEC Commissioner; six Family and Community Coordination Specialists (one in each of our six regional EEC offices), who report to the Project Manager, will lead the execution of at least one high quality plan as outlined below.

Project Category 1 – Tiered QRIS: Validation, Universal Participation and Quality Improvement (investments here are explained in details in Section (B) and Competitive Preference Priority #2). Project led by the Family/Community Coordination Specialist (for Standards and the Tiered QRIS).

PROJECT 1: We propose to spend \$12.2 million on program supports, online training, and technical assistance for early childhood programs to increase participation and help program advance on the tiered QRIS by providing funds.

PROJECT 2: We will spend \$1 million over four years to hire a vendor to validate the tiered QRIS, ensuring program quality matches assigned tiers and leads to improved child outcomes.

Project Category 2 – Standards: Validation and Alignment (investments here are explained in details in Section (C)(1)). These projects will be led by the Family and Community Coordination Specialist (for Standards and the tiered QRIS).

PROJECT 3: The state will hire a vendor(s) to analyze how well the state early learning and development standards are aligned to the essential domains of school readiness and state assessments, including the KEA (also addressed in detail in (E)(1) and (C)(2)), as well as augment the standards to better accommodate high needs populations, beginning with English language learners. This will cost the state \$820,000 in the first two years of the grant.

Project Category 3 – Measuring Growth Through the Massachusetts Early Learning and Development Assessment System (MELD) from Birth to Grade Three - (investments here are explained in details in Section (C)(2)). Project will be led by the Family and Community Coordination Specialist (screening and formative assessments).

PROJECT 4: The state will support the purchase of ASQ screening toolkits, norm-referenced assessments, and subscriptions for formative assessment tools (e.g. *the Work Sampling System*, *Teaching Strategies-GOLD*, *High Scope COR*) to implement MELD and the MKEA. Resources will be provided to 107 Coordinated Family and Community Engagement grantees, licensed and licensed exempt early education and care programs, and public schools as appropriate. The total cost is estimated at \$4.4 million with approximately \$250,000 allocated for trainings over years 2-4.

Project Category 4 - Universal Engagement of Families and the Public Using Evidence-Based Practice (investments here are explained in details in Section (C)(4)). This project will be led by the Family and Community Coordination Specialist (Family and Community Engagement)

PROJECT 5: The state will commit \$676,000 over four years to increasing the accessibility of early education and care materials to culturally and linguistically diverse families through translation services and multi-lingual brochures that convey the early learning and development standards to families.

PROJECT 6: The state proposed to spend \$1.6 million on early literacy, family literacy and financial literacy supports and other programs designed to promote healthy living and child development.

PROJECT 7: Over four years, the state proposes to spend \$600,000 to implement its partnership with the state's children's museums and the state library association to align informal opportunities with state standards.

PROJECT 8: The state will devote \$4.8 million to building up state infrastructure to support interagency collaboration on programs and services for high needs children from birth to age 5. Costs will include staff training and professional development for workers in the field, support for personnel with expertise in child development and early education, learning collaboratives on

key issues (e.g. children's mental health), and support for successful programs at participating state agencies. This work has been agreed to across agencies and is outlined in attached MOUs.

PROJECT 9: The state will devote \$400,000 to a comprehensive plan to increase support among early educators for children's family engagement and social and emotional development. This plan includes establishing a cohort of trainers each of the six state regions to train educators on their effective family engagement strategies.

Project Category 5 – Ensuring Competency through Workforce Knowledge, Skills and Practice-Based Support (investments here are explained in details in Section (D)(2)). These projects will be led by the Family and Community Coordination Specialist (Workforce Development).

PROJECT 10: The state will spend \$1.6 million in the first three years of the grant for the validation of workforce core competencies in social/emotional development and literacy/numeracy and to conduct a study of best practices in supporting social and emotional development.

PROJECT 11: The state is building an Early Educators Fellowship, a leadership institute for public elementary school principals and community-based providers that supports the alignment of early childhood education with K-3 education at \$375,000 over years 2-4.

PROJECT 12: The state will invest in \$800,000 over four years in an IHE to train early childhood educators in an innovative program for English language learners educators.

PROJECT 13: The state proposed to spend \$1.5 million over four years to support the development of a post-Master's degree certificate in early education and policy leadership.

PROJECT 14: Building off federal investment from the first Race to the Top (K-12) grant, the state will invest \$2.4 million over four years in its six regional Readiness Centers, which link

pre-K and K-12 professional development activities statewide with a focus on educator quality and the use of data.

PROJECT 15: The state will spend \$1.9 million over four years to create and implement a infrastructure for evidence-based coaching and mentoring program that will greatly enhance the quality of the early childhood education workforce.

Project Category 6 – Measuring Growth by Developing a Common Measure for Kindergarten Entry Assessment (investments here are explained in details in Section (E)(1)). These projects will be led by the Family and Community Coordination Specialist (Kindergarten Entry Assessment).

PROJECT 16: The state will spend \$575,000 in the first two years of the grant to hire a vendor to develop a common metric for early learning assessment tools to serve as the basis for the KEA.

Project Category 7 – Implementing the Early Childhood Information System (ECIS) (investments here are explained in details in Section (E)(2)). This project will be led by the Family/Community Coordination Specialist (Data Systems).

PROJECT 17: The state will frontload its \$1.1 million, four-year investment to create the next phase of the state’s horizontal Early Childhood Information System (ECIS) and enhance connections and information exchange with the SLDS.

Project Category 8 – Sustaining Program Effects in the Early Elementary Grades (investments here are explained in details in Competitive Preference Priority #4).

PROJECT 18: The state will spent \$4 million over four years to provide local communities and public schools that have early education and out of school time partnerships and a birth to 5 strategy.

Project Category 9 – Pre-K to Grade Three Alignment for Educational Success
(investments here are explained in details in Competitive Preference Priority #5).

PROJECT 19: The state will spend \$500,000 over four years on its *Brain Building in Progress* public awareness campaign, which touches on both family and community engagement and the effort to spread public knowledge of the state’s early learning and development standards (C)(1).

PROJECT 20: The state’s media partnership with WGBH, discussed in (C)(4), will create an online curriculum hub for early educators and a “School Readiness” website for parents. This project cost is \$2.1 million over four years, with heavy investment in the first 2 years.

Other costs include not outlined above but included in the budget tables are:

- Personnel – The state will spend \$3 million over four years to hire 9 full-time staff – Project Manager, Fiscal Manager, six Family/Community Coordination Specialist (to oversee 6 high quality plans); and an Inter-Agency Liaison
- The state has allocated \$500,000 over four years for RTTT-ELC Technical Assistance.
- The state will spend \$10,000 in year one to cover computer and technology costs.

We believe there is a strong alignment between our budget proposed here, our existing funds, and the priorities and high quality plans we have laid out throughout this document. These prospective funds represent an historic opportunity to improve the lives of the youngest, most vulnerable children in the Commonwealth—and their families. We have been diligent in choosing the above projects to ensure they serve as investments that can be sustained for decades to come. With many projects either front-loaded, structured as one-time investments, or consisting of four-year expenditures on infrastructure and systems-building efforts that are necessary for long-term growth, and with legacy of commitment from the state’s legislature and private sector partners, we are confident in the capacity of our plan to have a real and positive impact on the development of young children in the Commonwealth.

XVII. APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Appendix must include a complete Table of Contents, which includes the page number or attachment number, attachment title, and relevant selection criterion. A sample table of contents form is included below. Each attachment in the Appendix must be described in the narrative text of the relevant selection criterion, with a rationale for how its inclusion supports the narrative and the location of the attachment in the Appendix.

#	Attachment Title	Relevant Selection Criterion
A	ARRA Funding Table	A1
B	Promise Neighborhood Grant	A1
C	Sample Job Descriptions (3) for grant operations – Family/Community Coordinator	A3
D	Sample Job Descriptions (3) for grant operations – Tiered QRIS Specialist	A3
E	Sample Job Descriptions (3) for grant operations -- Family/Community Coordinator – program manager	A3
F	Tiered QRIS Standards	B1
G	Tiered QRIS – Standards Crosswalk	B1
H	Tiered QRIS Evaluation Logic Model	B3
I	MA Early Learning Standards	C1
J	AIR Study of Standards	C1
K	MA Standards Crosswalk	C1
L	Analysis of Common Core Standards	C1
M	WGBH Media Partnership and Research	C4, D2, Priority 5
N	Online Survey of Early Educators	C2 and C4
O	MIECHV Grant	C4
P	Brainbuilding in Progress Campaign – Next Steps	C4 and Priority 5
Q	Strategies for Improving the Early Education Workforce	D2

R	Mass. Core Competencies	D2
S	Kindergarten Entry Assessment Survey	E1
T	Core Goals of ECIS	E2
U	Workplan and Timeline for ECIS	E2
V	Technical Issues Surrounding Data Standards	E2
W	Data Sources for ECIS	E2
X	ECIS Uses and Outcomes	E2
Y	List of ECIS Indicators	E2
Z	MOU with EOE	A
AA	MOU with ESE	A, Priority 4, all
BB	MOU with DHE	A, D2
CC	MOU with SAC	A3
DD	MOU with Head Start State Collaboration Office	B1, Priority 4
EE	MOU with Children's Trust Fund	A, C4
FF	MOU with DPH	A, C4
GG	MOU with DMH	A, C4
HH	MOU with DCF	A, C4
II	MOU with DHCD	A, C4
JJ	MOU with DTA	A, C4, Priority 4
KK	MOU with ORI	A, C4
LL	Letters of Support	All

Below is a list of letters in support of this application from 62 organizations, including Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, public schools, early education and care providers, and a host of other committed stakeholders.

MA Senate President Teresa Murray

MA House Speaker Robert DeLeo

MA Joint Committee on Education

Alliance of YMCAs

Associated Early Education and Care

Associated Industries of Massachusetts
Barr Foundation

Berkshire United Way

Boston Children's Museum

Boston Public Schools

Bridgewater State University

Cambridge Public Schools

Catholic Charities

CAYL Institute

Davis Foundation

Early Intervention

Everett Public Schools

Federation for Children with Special Needs

Holyoke Public Schools

Lawrence Public Schools

Lowell Public Schools

Ludlow Public Schools

MA Association of School Committees

MA Association of School Superintendents

MA Association for Community Action

MA Association of Community Partnerships
for Children

MA Business Roundtable

MA Child Care Resource and Referral
Agencies

MA Chapter of the American Association of
Pediatrics

MA Elementary School Principals
Association

MA Elementary School principals
Association and Head Start Collaboration

MA Executive Office of Community
Colleges

MA Teachers Association

MA Association for Early Education and
Care (MADCA)

MA Afterschool Partnership

MassAEYC

Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education

Medford Public Schools

MA Head Start Association

MA Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition

North Essex Community College

Northampton Public Schools

Parents Alliance for Catholic Education

Parent Child Home Program

Raising a Reader

Reach Out and Read

Readiness Centers

SEIU – Local 509

Strategies for Children/Early Education for All

South Hadley Public Schools

Southbridge Public Schools

Taunton Public Schools

Thrive in 5

Together 4 Kids

United Way of Central Massachusetts

United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimac Valley

Urban College

Ware Public Schools

Watertown Public Schools

West Springfield Public Schools

Wheelock College

Worcester Public Schools