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PROJECT ABSTRACT

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has allocated to California \$10,653,948 in funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to aid the work of California's Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC). The Council's responsibilities are defined by federal law (42 U.S.C. 9837b), and by California Executive Order S-23-09 issued by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on November 9, 2009. The California Department of Education (CDE), subject to the policy directives of the ELAC, has been designated as the lead agency for purposes of the application.

The Council's thesis is that high-quality early childhood experiences are a critical foundation for achieving long-term outcomes for students, and that its work and recommendations will be targeted to policies that will improve kindergarten preparedness as a key step toward those long-term outcomes – particularly for those children with the greatest need. California has a highly diverse population of young children who receive services from a wide range of programs that vary in quality. Too many of the children who most need high-quality early childhood services do not receive those services. The Council also has a responsibility to work with K-12 leaders and educators to ensure that children make a smooth transition from early learning into school.

The Council proposes projects in three categories to move California's early learning system forward: (1) Develop a comprehensive statewide plan for an integrated early learning system; (2) Connect with children and families; and (3) Establishing the Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) to improve the quality of early learning.

The specific projects will include:

- Developing a comprehensive statewide plan for an integrated early learning system;

- Developing recommendations for a unified early childhood data system;
- Designing systems to implement the forthcoming Early Childhood Educator Competencies; and
- Piloting the state's forthcoming QRIS.

PROJECT NARRATIVE

I. The Need for Assistance and Objectives

A. The Need

California's population is younger, lower-income, and more mobile than the population of most states. The population of California's birth-to-five population – estimated at 3.1 million by the California Department of Public Health – is higher than the total population of many states. Significantly, 7.36% of California's population is under the age of five, the 11th-highest percentage among the 50 states.

Poverty is a very real challenge for California's children. Forty-five percent of California's young children live in families with an income at 200% of the federal poverty or less, a slightly higher percentage than for the nation as a whole (44%). Financial issues in California are urban, suburban, and rural. In urban areas, 48% of California's young children are low income (compared to 52% nationally); in suburban areas, 43% (36%), and in rural areas, 58% (53%). Many of these children are children of the working poor – 52% of California's low-income parents have full-time, year-round employment, higher than the 47% national average.¹ According to the California Department of Public Health, more than half of the babies born in 2008 in California were Latino (52%), with 27% white, 6% Asian, and 5% black.

Our knowledge of the conditions facing California's young children compels us to act to improve the services provided them and their families.

B. The Council's Objective for the Use of the Grant

Our thesis is that if we design a birth-to-five system focused on high-quality programs that will improve school preparedness for all children – and particularly those children most in

¹ All data in this paragraph comes from the National Center on Children in Poverty's state data profile on low-income young children, available at <http://www.nccp.org/profiles/>.

need of support -- then we will improve California's long-term educational, health, and economic outcomes.

The mission of the California ELAC is to promote and enhance the optimal development of young children across all domains, including promoting school preparedness. This will be achieved through a coordinated, comprehensive, and high quality early education and care service system throughout California for young children from birth to school entry with access for children, families, and communities.

Our long-term goal for all young children in California must be that they become successful adults, and are prepared to succeed in their K-12 schools, in college, and careers. A strong early learning system is critical to California's long-term efforts to improve its education system, its health outcomes, and its economy. Quality early learning helps children develop the cognitive and social skills they will need to thrive throughout their lives. Our investment in high-quality services for children from birth through age five – particularly those children facing significant barriers to school success – will pay enormous long-term dividends for the state.

The Council is committed to ensuring that children of all races, language backgrounds, and income levels enter kindergarten prepared. We also are committed to ensuring articulation to, alignment with, and smooth transitions into the K-12 system, in order to improve student achievement and close the achievement gap. We are committed to supporting parents and families as they nurture, enrich, and encourage their child; we are committed to working with the full range of program providers and early childhood professionals in California who play a valuable role in working with those families in support of child development.

The strategies we have chosen for our application are intended to improve kindergarten preparedness in the state, leading to improved long-term outcomes. Executing these strategies

will require collaboration among state, local, and private partners – and parents. In the context of California's overall budget (and its current budget challenges), the strategies chosen by the Council are intended to maximize the leverage of the funding and use what we learn in the grant period to drive long-term change.

II. The Availability of Early Childhood Education in California

A 2009 study by the RAND Corporation provided a picture of the overall preschool system in California (not limited to government-funded programs). RAND estimates that nearly three out of every four California children who are one or two years away from kindergarten entry have a non-parental early care or education arrangement, with 59% of all preschool-age children in a center-based program. The preschool-age children in center-based care are both in preschool (50% of the total population) and in center-based child care only (9% of the total population). Participation rates are even higher for 4-year-olds. Another 16% of the preschool-age population is solely in home-based relative or non-relative care.² One of the Council's statutory obligations is to recommend ways to improve access to quality early childhood programs, which includes a range of programs in a variety of settings.

A series of studies by the RAND Corporation found that quality in center-based programs in California attended by preschool-age children -- both public and private programs -- is not adequate, that California preschool on the whole is not of an adequate quality, and that high quality preschool programs frequently do not reach the children who need it most. According to RAND, the percentage of "children in the groups with the largest school-preparedness and achievement shortfalls [that] are currently participating in center-based [early childhood education] programs that meet quality benchmarks" may be as low as 10 to 15%.³

² All material in this paragraph comes from Karoly, Lynn. A, (2009) *Preschool Adequacy and Efficiency in California: Issues, Policy Options, and Recommendations*, RAND Corporation (2009), at 37-38, available on-line at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG889/>.

³ Karoly, L., et. al. (2008). *Prepared to Learn: The Nature and Quality of Early Care and Education for Preschool-Age Children in California*. RAND Corporation, at 150.

A. Available Programming

The three primary government-financed education and care programs serving California's children are state-funded preschool, child care, and Head Start; a description of each is provided below. Another important governmental funding stream for young children is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Better service to children identified for special education is an important element of the Council's work.

Each of these programs plays a major role in school preparedness, and will need to be a full partner in the work of the Council. The Council recognizes that these programs will need to work not only with each other, but with many other health and human services provided through federal and state funding, and with other programs supported locally and by parents. The Council is also committed to appropriately supporting those parents who choose not to enroll their children in government-funded programming or programming outside the home.

1. State Preschool

California's state preschool program is one of the nation's oldest, and in 2008 new legislation consolidated multiple funding streams into a single California State Preschool Program. Programs are provided in a mixed delivery system, including the public schools and a range of private providers. One strength of the program is its inclusion of 3-year-olds, which distinguishes it from some other states with large preschool programs. California offers both a part-day and full-day program.⁴

According to the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), the program serves 97,948 children; however, that data predates the 2008 legislation, and California's listed enrollment is likely to jump significantly in future reports. NIEER uses ten criteria to gauge the

⁴ *The State of Preschool 2009*, National Institute for Early Education Research (hereinafter "NIEER Yearbook 2009"), Barnett et. al., available on-line at <http://nieer.org/yearbook/>, at pp. 38-39 (California profile).

quality of a state-funded preschool program, and California's program meets four of the ten quality benchmarks identified by NIEER (with a fifth in the implementation stage).

2. Child Care

California's child care income eligibility ceiling is the highest of the 48 contiguous states.⁵ Families supported by the Child Care and Development Block Grant in California are far less likely to have a co-payment than families in other states – only 35%, as opposed to 64% nationally.⁶ And unlike many states, California does require child care directors and teachers to meet certain minimal training and experience qualifications.⁷

The population in child care in California is older than the national norm. In California 42% of children in child care are 3- to 5-year olds (above the national average of 35%), and only 19% of the children in child care are 0-2 year olds (well below the national average of 30%).⁸

More than half of the subsidized child care in California is provided outside of centers; according to the Center for Law and Social Policy, only 47% of children are in center-based settings, well below the national average of 61%.⁹ California children are far more likely than children elsewhere to be in the care of a family member; 21% of child care in California is through license-exempt care with a relative.¹⁰

Data from California's child care resource and referral network indicate that California has 38,132 family child care homes (including 314 that are nationally accredited), and 11,054

⁵ NIEER Yearbook 2009 at 250.

⁶ Center for the Study of Law and Social Policy, California Child Care Participation State Profile 2008 (hereinafter "CLASP child care profile") (http://www.clasp.org/in_the_states?id=0005).

⁷ NIEER Yearbook 2009 at 253.

⁸ CLASP child care profile.

⁹ CLASP child care profile.

¹⁰ CLASP child care profile.

child care centers (including 716 that are nationally accredited).¹¹ The resource and referral network data shows that of 1,063,193 child care spaces in California, 35% are in family child care homes.¹² Child care – both subsidized and non-subsidized – plays an extremely important role in serving and supporting California's children and families.

3. Head Start and Early Head Start

Head Start is a federal-to-local program with a long history of serving children of the greatest need, and providing comprehensive services beyond classroom education. The percentage of California children enrolled in Head Start is slightly below the national average. Head Start serves 6% of California 3-year-olds (compared to 7% nationally), and 10% of California 4-year-olds (compared to 11% nationally).¹³ Early Head Start – which serves children from birth to age 3 – has increased in size proportionately in California from 2005-2008; 10.9% of children served through Head Start/Early Head Start in California are now aged 0, 1, or 2.¹⁴

Recent national data show that Head Start in California serves a population that is disproportionately Latino compared to other states. In California 72% of Head Start enrollees are Latino, compared to a national percentage of 36%. The percentage of enrollees who are white (36%) is comparable to the national average of 39% -- but the percentage of black children enrolled is far below that of the nation as a whole (9% to 29%).¹⁵ This is largely consistent with California's overall population trend. According to 2008 U.S. Census estimates, the percentage of Latinos in California's population (36.61%) is the second-highest percentage in the nation

¹¹ 2009 *Child Care in the State of: California*, National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (hereinafter "2009 NACCRRRA profile") (www.naccrra.org/randd/data/docs/CA.pdf).

¹² 2009 NACCRRRA profile.

¹³ NIEER Yearbook 2009 at 5, 39.

¹⁴ Head Start in California Facts and Figures, January 2009, California Head Start Association (<http://www.caheadstart.org/facts.html>), at 3.

¹⁵ Center for the Study of Law and Social Policy, California Head Start Participation State Profile 2008 (hereinafter "CLASP Head Start profile") (http://www.clasp.org/in_the_states?id=0005), at 2.

behind New Mexico – but the percentage of blacks in California (6.67%) is below the national average of 12.85%.

Finally, the percentage of Head Start enrollees in California from a single-parent family (43%) is markedly lower than the national percentage (57%).¹⁶

B. Status of Current Collaboration and Governance

The Tri-Chairs of California's Council represent three different agencies: the California Children and Families Commission ("First 5 California"); the CDE; and the Office of the Secretary of Education.

a. State Agencies

First 5 California is dedicated to improving the lives of California's young children and their families through a comprehensive system of education, health services, childcare, and other crucial programs. Since its creation in 1998, First 5 California has brought these critical services to millions of parents, caregivers, and children ages 0 to 5, and strives to reach thousands more every day. First 5 California administers and distributes funds to First 5 County Commissions located in all 58 of California's counties. Funds are used to address the local needs of communities statewide. First 5 California's programs include the Power of Preschool program, Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards, and the school readiness program, each targeted to the educational and developmental needs of young children.

The CDE oversees the state's diverse and dynamic public school system that is responsible for the education of more than six million children and young adults in more than 10,000 schools. The CDE, run by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, is responsible for enforcing education law and regulations -- and for continuing to reform and improve public

¹⁶ CLASP Head Start profile, at 2.

elementary school programs, secondary school programs, adult education, some preschool programs, and child care programs. The CDE's Child Development Division oversees programs including state Pre-K and child care and development. The CDE is also responsible for the state's Head Start Collaboration office.

The Secretary of Education serves as the primary education advisor to the Governor committed to creating, promoting, and supporting the Governor's policies to ensure equal access to quality education for all Californians. As a member of the Governor's cabinet, the Secretary of Education advises the Governor on all educational issues from preschool through higher education. The Office of the Secretary of Education (OSE) is instrumental in the development of the Administration's education policy initiatives and is responsible for spearheading all Administration-sponsored legislation for education. OSE is also responsible for providing the Governor and the Administration with detailed policy and fiscal analyses, as well as recommendations on all education legislation and proposed initiatives.

Another critical partner is the Department of Social Services, which serves, aids, and protects needy and vulnerable children and adults in ways that strengthen and preserve families, encourage personal responsibility, and foster independence. The Department's Community Care Licensing Division is responsible for child care licensing and monitoring. In addition, the Department's Children and Family Services Division provides assistance in adoptions, foster care, children's services, and child welfare.

The state has also established other cross-cutting committees that have addressed the need for the expansion of high-quality early learning opportunities. In November 2007 the Governor's Committee on Education Excellence issued a report calling on the state to improve its

early education system.¹⁷ In January 2008 the P-16 Council urged that California "provide all children with access to a high-quality prekindergarten program."¹⁸

b. Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee

An important step in California's early childhood policy development came in 2008 when the legislature established the California Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee (CAEL QIS). The CAEL QIS Advisory Committee expires at the end of 2010, and is responsible for making recommendations to the Legislature to create an early learning quality improvement system. It is required to analyze existing infrastructure, develop a quality rating scale, develop a funding model aligned with the quality rating scale, and recommend how best to use resources in a comprehensive effort to improve the state's early learning system. The Council includes all of the members of the CAEL QIS Advisory Committee; accordingly, the Council can build on the state's previous work to improve the quality of its early learning offerings.

c. Other infrastructure in California

As a statewide body led by representatives of state government entities, the Council builds on the work of many county, local, and non-governmental organizations.

California relies extensively on an infrastructure of county First 5 commissions. These 58 commissions have invested in many strategies to improve the quality and accessibility of early education and care programs, and support a diverse range of providers. First 5 county commissions have implemented quality improvement systems, with more than half of them funding quality enhancements. First 5 county commissions have utilized their resources to

¹⁷ *Students First: Renewing Hope for California's Future*, Governor's Committee on Education Excellence, November 2007, at 34-36 (<http://www.everychildprepared.org/index.php>).

¹⁸ *Closing the Achievement Gap: Report of Superintendent Jack O'Connell's P-16 Council*, California P-16 Council, January 2008, at 21 (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/pc/ctagrpt.asp>).

develop infrastructures that incorporate quality assurances, technical assistance from specialists, standardized measures (and re-measures), training and professional development, and community outreach and development.

California also has the nation's longest standing system of resource and referral agencies, a well-developed system that supports parents, providers, and local communities in finding, planning for, and providing affordable, quality child care. Local resource and referral agencies provide a wide range of free services that are available to all parents and providers.

Another significant local resource are the Local Child Care and Development Planning Councils (LPCs). Their mission is to plan for child care and development services based on the needs of families in the local community. LPCs are intended to serve as a forum to address the child care needs of all families in the community for all types of child care, both subsidized and non-subsidized.

The California K-12 community plays an active role in supporting early learning. California has more than 10,000 public schools in more than 1,000 districts educating more than 6 million children.¹⁹ There are also 58 county offices of education. K-12 educators will be an important partner for the Council as it seeks to develop policies that help prepare young children for school success.

The state also benefits from the work of many higher education professionals who train early education and care providers. California's community colleges currently serve more than 50,000 students enrolled in two or more child development classes. In recent years community college faculty have agreed on a common set of core classes, which is intended to improve quality and consistency, and to strengthen articulation with the state university system. Supports

¹⁹ *Fact Book 2009: Handbook of Education Information*, California Department of Education, 2009 (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/pn/fb/index.asp>), at 10.

are available to help students intending to work in the early education and care field.

Additionally, the California State University plays a major role in offering Bachelor degree attainment for Early Childhood Educators, and many of the community college faculty receive their Master's degrees from a California State University.

In addition to structures that are directly government-supported, California benefits from the work of many statewide associations and member organizations that work to improve the quality of early childhood service.

C. Status of Key Elements of California's Early Learning System and Goals for Increasing the Number of Children Entering Kindergarten Ready to Learn

1. *Status of Key Elements of California's Early Learning System*

The Head Start Act requires the Council, as part of its application, to describe "the State early learning standards and the State's goals for increasing the number of children entering kindergarten ready to learn." The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requires state applicants to report on the status of their early learning standards, professional development, and data systems.

a. Early Learning Standards

California has developed learning standards (the *California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations* and the *California Preschool Learning Foundations*), aligned curriculum frameworks, and aligned assessments (the *Desired Results Development Profile*), which are also aligned to California's K-12 standards.

The end goal for California is to have the following progression of research-based standards:

- Age-appropriate learning standards for the youngest children, ages birth through five, that ensure their optimal development as a foundation for kindergarten readiness and success;
- Early elementary standards that build on the early learning standards while preparing children for the rigor of middle and high school; and
- High school standards anchored to college and career readiness, with an aligned progression of standards in middle school that prepare students for a rigorous high school experience.

California's work will play out against a rapidly-evolving national conversation about learning standards. The issue of California's K-12 Curriculum Standards is scheduled to be considered by the State Board of Education on August 2, 2010.²⁰ At a national level, conversation is already underway about how any revision of K-12 standards will impact early learning, and whether a similar initiative should be undertaken focused on birth through preschool. California has the opportunity to have a major influence on those discussions.

The Council has a responsibility for recommending improvements to early learning standards, and the work that flows naturally from those standards.

- In fulfilling its responsibility, the Council must ensure that, as with the present foundations, any revised standards are developmentally appropriate, lead to kindergarten readiness, and are well-articulated from birth through preschool. In addition, the Council will work with K-12 leaders to ensure that the junction point

²⁰ <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr10/agenda201008.asp>.

between early learning and K-12 standards is at the appropriate place, and that the progression of standards that begins with early learners continues on an appropriate trajectory through the early elementary grades.

- If and when the standards are updated, the Council can also play a strong role in ensuring that programs in California are supported by high-quality curriculum frameworks. Those frameworks will help ensure the use of research-based and standards-aligned curricula, which will help teachers to educate young children in developmentally-appropriate ways.
- Finally, the Council can make recommendations for any necessary updates to its assessments based on changes in standards, and monitor national developments in assessments to see how new research and emerging best practices could potentially impact California.

While it is essential that the standards as written be of the highest quality, the true impact on children comes from the dissemination and implementation of the standards. This means that the standards should animate not only improved curriculum frameworks and assessment, but also educator training, practice, and professional development. The Council can play a leadership role in working with the California early childhood community to develop policies that will use improved standards to support improved child outcomes.

b. Professional Development

California already has underway numerous projects designed to provide early care and education personnel with preparation, training, and professional development. Those projects include the following:

- The Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC), a comprehensive training program for trainers of infant/toddler caregivers that includes a regional support network to provide PITC training and technical assistance at the local level, community college PITC demonstration sites, and the Beginning Together project to include information about infants and toddlers with special needs;
- Health and safety training for child care personnel;
- The California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN), which provides statewide professional development, technical assistance, and support to preschool program administrators and teachers on the preschool learning foundations and the preschool curriculum framework, including a focus on dual language learners and children with special needs;
- Training funds for license-exempt child care providers;
- The Public Broadcasting Preschool Education Project, a train the trainer model focused on the appropriate use of its educational television programming in the education of preschool-aged children in home-based settings;
- Training and stipends for school-age program professionals;
- The Child Development Training Consortium, which provides support for students to access college-level child development coursework to raise the quality of care in early care and education settings;

- The Career Incentive Grant program, which provides support for college course work leading to the attainment of a Child Development Permit;
- The California Early Childhood Mentor Program, providing mentoring by experienced teachers or directors to students at over 100 California community college campuses;
- The Child Care Salary and Retention Initiative Program, which is administered by Local Child Care and Development Planning Councils to support child care staff retention activities;
- Training for CalWORKs Recipients as Child Care Teachers, a project administered by the Foundation for California Community Colleges;
- The Child Development Teacher/Supervisor Grant Program, administered by the California Student Aid Commission to support college course work leading to the attainment of a Child Development Permit – with recipients required to work for a full year in a licensed child care center for each year they are supported by a grant;
- The Stipend for Permit, in which the Child Development Training Consortium helps potential teachers obtain a Child Development Permit by paying the cost of the application fees;
- The Child Development Permit Matrix Professional Growth Advisors program, which supports a registry of Professional Growth Advisors to assist ECE students;
- The Child Care Initiative Project, which provides local technical assistance in building and retaining the supply of licensed family child care homes; and
- The Family Child Care at Its Best Project, administered by the University of California-Davis, which provides training services to licensed family child care home providers.

The Council has indicated that it does not want to duplicate existing efforts. Fortunately, the work of CAEL QIS is likely to identify areas where the state's training and professional development efforts need to be strengthened. CAEL QIS has a Workforce and Professional Development and Incentives Subcommittee, whose charge is to "develop professional standards and a delivery system that supports high-quality initial preparation and ongoing professional development linked to quality learning standards and financial incentives for enhanced training."

c. Data Systems

CAEL QIS has a Data Systems for Program Improvement and Research Subcommittee; its charge is "to consider data systems for program improvement and evaluation/research, including the attributes of a data system that would effectively use data to coordinate and improve quality among public and private, local, state, and federal early learning programs and providers."²¹ One of the Subcommittee's areas of focus is on how to provide a unique student identifier for children in early learning and care programs.²² The Subcommittee has also taken an inventory of what data elements are collected by different programs, which will help inform the work of developing a unified system.²³

2. *Goals for Increasing the Number of Children Entering Kindergarten Ready to Learn*

Children are born ready to learn, and the Council's obligation is to lead the creation of a system that will prepare children for school entry. Research already conducted in California shows that many children are not receiving the high-quality services they need to help prepare them for school entry. We know that increasing quality and access will be critical to achieving

²¹ *California Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee 2009 Interim Report*, January 2010 (hereinafter "CAEL QIS Interim Report") (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/sb1629committee.asp>), at Appendix B-3.

²² CAEL QIS Interim Report, at 17.

²³ CAEL QIS Interim Report, at Appendix F.

our goals, and that the pilot program described in this application will teach us more about what quality looks like and how we can best implement it. Our short-term goal is to use the pilots to improve the preparedness of some number of children in a diverse set of settings, and our long-term goal is to use those lessons to improve preparedness statewide.

Another important element of our goal-setting work is developing improved metrics and data collection. Because California currently does not have consensus on a baseline metric for how many children are entering kindergarten prepared, and does not have a data system capable of tracking the number of children entering kindergarten prepared, it has not yet been able to set hard numerical goals for increasing the number of children entering kindergarten prepared. However, the Council will seek to address all of these elements in developing a comprehensive plan.

III. The Council's Action Agenda: Strategies for Increasing the Number of Children Ready for Kindergarten

California's action agenda recognizes that improving outcomes for children will demand a collaborative approach, and a real commitment of time and energy. The purpose of this action agenda is to provide a framework for that commitment of time and energy, and to ensure that our efforts lead to real policy change. This outline of the action agenda is divided into two sections: (A) The Council's objectives for the grant; (B) California's strategies for increasing the number of children entering school ready to learn, and the activities the Council can undertake in support of its strategies, including the activities to be funded through the HHS grant.

A. The Council's Objectives for the Grant

The Council's primary objectives for its grant fall into three broad categories: (1) Develop a comprehensive statewide plan for an integrated early learning system; (2) Connect with children and families; and (3) Implement the QRIS, including improving the quality of interactions in early learning settings.

- *Develop a comprehensive plan for an integrated system.* In a state as large and diverse as California, and in a field like early childhood that has at times in its history been deeply fragmented, the idea of a unified vision for early childhood systems is enormously powerful. California has never had a long-term plan focused on the needs of children and families (particularly unserved and underserved families) that ties together multiple programs. A comprehensive birth-to-five vision for early childhood education and school preparedness in California would provide a north star for future policy change.
- *Connect with children and families.* We know that many parents choose to access publicly-supported early education and care services, but at this time we do not

know which children are in which programs. To help parents access services more effectively, we need to provide better information and resources to those parents. A unified early childhood data system will support parents and educators with better information on how to improve child outcomes, will provide policymakers with better data to drive their decision-making, and will allow for improved research into the short- and long-term impact of early childhood services.

- In addition, as the state moves toward the implementation of a new Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), it will work with families to determine how best to help them utilize that system.
- *Implement the QRIS, including improving the quality of interactions in early learning settings.* Each year children in California spend tens of millions of hours with early childhood professionals. The quality of those interactions has an enormous impact on their development and chance for long term success. The state's forthcoming QRIS system and its Early Childhood Educator Competencies will help drive improvements in the quality of the state's early learning programs and workforce – improvements that will require changes to how professionals are prepared and supported.

Achieving these objectives will require collaboration across a wide spectrum of early learning stakeholders and a strong partnership with the K-12 community.

B. Strategies for Increasing the Number of Children Entering Kindergarten Prepared

For each of its objectives, California will have a strategy and activities designed to increase the number of children entering kindergarten ready to learn.

The Council's approach will seek to maximize the leverage of the federal funds. For example, the Council has looked for opportunities where the expenditure of Council funds could help improve the impact of substantial existing funding streams. Similarly, the Council is concerned about not duplicating efforts with other projects already underway in California. The Council believes that the projects identified here will help inform the effective use of the state's major early childhood education funding streams – particularly preschool and child care funding – and also believes that these projects do not duplicate other work already underway (although they quite consciously build on work already completed and in progress). Through the course of the grant the Council will ensure that it is focused on leveraging the use of funds and ensuring that its work is not redundant.

1. The Comprehensive Plan

a. Overview

The objective of a comprehensive plan is to create a picture for what California's early learning system will look like in 5-10 years, with a vision for how the state will support young children and their families, an assessment of how California is currently serving young children and their families, and a plan for getting from where the state is to where it should be. Rather than simply describing existing programs and discussing how they might be improved or expanded, the comprehensive plan will include a thoughtful design for what the state's early learning system should look like in the future. The comprehensive plan ultimately will not be a series of program-centered wish lists, but will instead be a document focused on the experiences of parents and children.

Our comprehensive plan will begin by articulating a vision of a coordinated system addressing the range of policies affecting children ages birth through five, with a focus on school

preparedness and access to high quality education and care; the birth to five system will be the first stage of a seamless progression for children from birth through elementary school, with alignment among the full range of early learning programs and K-12. Developing a meaningful vision will require the Council's high-level leadership and the engagement of a range of key stakeholders. The vision will focus on the needs of young children and families – particularly the needs of underrepresented populations and children with special needs – and will look at California's population of young children and determine how its needs can best be met. The vision will begin and end with the importance of parents, but also must include a discussion of the role of government, and what early education and care programs will look like when the Council's vision is realized.

One of the first important actions in the comprehensive plan development process will be to provide a strong definition of "program quality." This definition will be based on the work of CAEL QIS, which will be completed by the end of 2010. Building on this key initial step, the Council will design systems to ensure that providers understand the definition of quality, and can develop a plan for ensuring that government-funded providers ultimately have the support needed to reach the agreed-upon threshold. The Council's definition of quality will also inform its plans for engaging parents, to educate parents about what quality programming is and how they can look for it. The Council's vision will call for a system that not only makes available high quality experiences, but ensures that children and families have the broadest possible access to those experiences.

In defining a policy vision, the Council will address the key elements required by the Head Start Act:

- Conducting a periodic statewide needs assessment;

- Identifying opportunities for collaboration;
- Recommending strategies for increasing the overall participation of children in early education and care, including underrepresented and special populations;
- Developing recommendations regarding professional development and career advancement; and
- Assessing the capacity of higher education to support the development of early childhood educators.

The Council's comprehensive plan may make recommendations on other related policy areas as needed that will lead to positive outcomes for children.²⁴

Once the vision has been articulated, the Council will assess California's needs by comparing the vision to the current reality. California already has done extensive work to analyze its existing programming. In assessing the current conditions facing California's children, the Council will draw heavily on research and analysis already completed.

The comprehensive plan is meant to provide a long-term vision for California, but for the long term vision to be realized, much needs to happen immediately. After establishing the vision and the current reality, the comprehensive plan will articulate a roadmap for getting from where California is to where it wants to go. For the Council's recommendations to have an impact on the lives of young children, they need to be translated into policy change; where the plan identifies policies that are not consistent with the Council's vision for young children, it will recommend changing the policies to improve child outcomes. The comprehensive plan will identify the resource levels needed to achieve the stated goals. The Council will consider how to

²⁴ The comprehensive plan will play a major role in the Council's fulfillment of its federal responsibilities. As described here, it will address all of the Council's obligations except for two, which are addressed elsewhere in this application. Those other two areas are recommendations to improve state early learning standards (described above in III.B.4) and recommendations to establish a unified data collection system (described below in IV.B.2); the Council may choose to include a discussion of these elements in the comprehensive plan as well.

most effectively use existing resources and attract new resources, including federal funds, in order to improve program quality and child outcomes, with a focus on the importance of attracting and retaining effective and well trained professionals. The comprehensive plan will also build on the work of CAEL QIS by identifying the new QRIS system as a driver of system change.

The current fiscal climate does not allow for the immediate infusion of additional state resources. Therefore, the comprehensive plan will address the utilization of existing resources, to ensure that the use of those resources is effectively serving the state's goals. The comprehensive plan also will discuss the respective roles of parents, governments (including federal, state, and local), the private sector, and the many partners who support the work of early education and care in California.

In sum, the comprehensive plan will be a system design and action plan quite unlike anything California has had before.

b. Specific Activities

- The Council will lead a statewide conversation about the needs of young children and their families. As part of that conversation, the Council will identify which needs are appropriately served by government-funded programs. This discussion will involve public meetings in different parts of the state, and invitations to a wide range of constituents to participate.
 - The Council will start the discussion with a draft of a broad vision so that the series of statewide conversations will have greater structure. The Council has sufficient expertise to prepare a "rough draft" of a vision to facilitate public conversation, with the expectation that the draft will evolve through the course of

Council discussions and public input. The plan will be aspirational and long-term (5 to 10 years), with the idea that while resources may not be currently available to implement some elements of the plan, having the plan will allow the state to make better decisions about its use of resources.

- Although the discussion will not be limited by some of the parameters that defined the CAEL QIS process, the final CAEL QIS report will inform the comprehensive plan. The Council will seek to keep to an absolute minimum the revisiting of recommendations made by CAEL QIS.
- The state will conduct an analysis of existing research on the state's current early childhood offerings, and use the findings from a meta-analysis (and any other available resources) to describe a baseline of where the state's early childhood work currently stands. The Council also will identify whether there is any key baseline information that existing research does not provide – and if so, will work with partners to develop the necessary baseline information. In developing a set of baseline data, the Council will focus on that information needed to address the Council's goals and objectives.
 - The analysis of the state's current status will include an overview of conditions for all children, but will also include an analysis of conditions for children in different "subgroups" under federal education law – particularly those subgroups whose K-12 performance is below state averages. One major purpose of the comprehensive plan is to recommend improvements in service to those children. This analysis must be cognizant of California's extraordinarily diverse population, including the many children whose primary home language is not English.

- The state will also analyze the current condition of higher education preparation programs, other training programs, and professional development. The Council recognizes that California's preparation and professional development efforts need to effectively serve the full range of early childhood providers across multiple programs and settings. The comprehensive plan will address the state's needs in these areas, including how to provide training and credentials to professionals already working in the field, and how to offer basic skills education and courses at times and in a manner that is accessible to current and potential providers.
- The Council is strongly committed to improving conditions for infants and toddlers. In June 2010, the CAEL QIS Advisory Committee considered a new "Infant/Toddler Early Learning and Care Needs Assessment," prepared by the American Institutes for Research. The Council's comprehensive plan will include infants and toddlers in its visioning, baseline analysis, and action planning.
- With the vision and the baseline data in hand, the Council will develop a roadmap for moving the state from where it is to where it plans to be. That roadmap will include recommendations for yearly benchmarks to ensure that the state is progressing toward its vision.
- The Council also will make recommendations on the tools providers need to reach the expected levels of quality, and for providing public information about the results of the state's quality improvement efforts. The Council will specifically discuss the level of resources needed to implement higher levels of quality, given the state's goals for child access to existing programs; in so doing, the Council will consider the need for high-quality personnel.

- The Council will identify any barriers in federal or state law to the implementation of its vision.
- The Council also will design a process for periodically updating the comprehensive plan and needs assessment in future years.

c. Budget

Implementing a successful comprehensive planning process will require a substantial investment of staff and expert consultant time, in addition to the cost of holding meetings and producing materials. The total budget for the comprehensive plan will be \$600,000. This amount includes fixed costs for managing the process, preparing and disseminating the final report, and hiring consultants and experts to support the process. The specific consultants and experts needed will be determined based on the CAEL QIS report and the analysis of existing research, and will be hired as consultants to the process. The Council's role will be to drive high-level policy conversation.

2. Connecting with Children and Families

a. Overview

Connecting with children and families will inform all of the Council's work. For example, the comprehensive plan will describe a more parent-friendly early childhood system, with specific attention to how parents can best access programs and work with providers. In addition, the QRIS pilot design will focus on how California's diverse parents will understand and access the system in an effort to provide the best outcomes for their children.

Another essential aspect of improving the connection to families and children is data. Better data about California's early childhood services will improve the state's ability to target limited resources to strategies most likely to improve outcomes for children. The system should

also provide educators with the information they need to serve those children, and policymakers with the information they need to manage the state's resources. Moreover, a unified early learning data system will provide parents with information they can use to advocate for their children and work successfully with program providers.

The unified system will have a horizontal dimension by connecting across multiple agencies, and a vertical dimension by connecting to or expanding upon longitudinal data (particularly the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) and the California Longitudinal Teacher Integrated Data Education System (CALTIDES)).

In defining the shape of the system, the Council will draw on the work of the CAEL QIS data subcommittee, which has begun the important work of identifying key questions that a unified data system should be able to answer. The CAEL QIS data subcommittee has prepared a draft vision statement, which states that the "primary goal" of the system will be to "provide timely, accessible, and useful data." The Council can work with stakeholders to ensure that the data in the system is truly useful, and then work to design a system that will make that data accessible in a timely manner. The Council's system design can build on the eight key principles identified by the CAEL QIS subcommittee: the system must be "(1) confidential; (2) useable/practical; (3) accessible and interoperable; (4) transparent; (5) includes and connects child, family, teacher/provider, and program data; (6) provider-friendly; (7) easily adaptable and can grow and change over time; and (8) dynamic."²⁵ National resources are also currently being developed (including through the Early Childhood Data Collaborative) that could help California manage the policy aspects of designing a unified data system.

The Council and other policymakers will set parameters for the work by identifying key audiences and deciding what information should be in the system. The system design will only

²⁵ CAEL QIS Interim Report, at 17.

succeed if it will meet the needs of its many potential end users, including: parents, providers, legislators, state agencies, researchers, medical/social service providers, and the Council itself. The Council is well positioned to lead the policy work needed to create a unified system, but substantial technical work is needed to do the necessary mapping and architecture design to implement a unified data system. Council funds can be used to initiate that work. As the technical work is done, the Council can address the policy and governance issues raised by a unified system, in order to design a roadmap for the state to implement a system that is useful to end users, technically sound, practical to administer at the state level, not unduly burdensome to local providers, and compliant with all appropriate privacy laws.

b. Specific Activities

As the Council considers the design work needed for a unified data system, it will review federally-funded data initiatives in both education and human services. Having a plan for a well-designed system would allow California to identify funding opportunities from federal and private sources, and use those funds as part of a larger plan, rather than as stand-alone initiatives. Ideally, the unified data system in its final form will be no more expensive to maintain than California's current data systems, or even less expensive. However, there will undoubtedly be some transition costs to a redesigned system, and federal funds may be helpful in making the transition possible.

In addition to the costs that will be borne by the state, the design work must be extremely sensitive to the burden data collection places on providers. For a unified system to succeed, providers not only need to be trained in how to use the resulting data, they need to have the resources and training necessary to ensure that data is entered correctly in the first place. The

training and resources needed may vary somewhat across the different settings in which early education and care is provided, which the system design must acknowledge and address.

c. Budget

The Council designates \$1,825,248 to complete a thorough analysis and assessment of existing data systems that collect information on children ages zero to five, and to make recommendations on the most efficient and cost-effective ways to collect data, and to consolidate, implement, and/or develop an Early Childhood Education (ECE) data system. The analysis will review the potential of expanding an existing system or systems for this purpose. The design will include the assignment and tracking of a Unique Identifier (UI) for children ages zero to five that will expand or link to the existing data base of children in the K-12 system. The design will also include an analysis of the costs to local child development agencies for both data collection and data input into different possible system designs.

3. Establish the QRIS to Improve the Quality of Early Learning Settings

a. Overview

Research shows that nothing is more important to the development of young children than the quality of their interaction with adults²⁶ – and many children will spend a significant amount of time interacting with early education and care professionals. Improving the quality of those interactions will have a tremendous impact on long-term outcomes for children. Two major ongoing efforts that can provide a foundation for ensuring the quality of the state's early

²⁶ In this context, "adults" includes parents, other caregivers, and early care and education professionals. Research has shown the importance of adult interaction to a young child's language development, most notably the 1995 book *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children* by Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley.

childhood workforce are the Early Childhood Educator Competencies project and the work of CAEL QIS.²⁷

The Early Childhood Educator Competencies project is a joint initiative of the CDE and First 5 California, which has included representatives from multiple agencies and faculty from the three segments of California's higher education system. The purpose of the project is to describe the core knowledge, skills, and dispositions of early childhood educators, aligned with the infant/toddler learning and development foundations and the preschool learning foundations. These are intended to be the cornerstone of preparation, training, and professional development in early childhood education and development, and will be released this year.

An essential aspect of the CAEL QIS Advisory Committee's final report will be recommendations about provider quality. High-quality personnel are an essential element of a successful early childhood program. Accordingly, the QRIS system designed by CAEL QIS will be a potential engine of improvement for early childhood personnel quality. The QRIS system should help to teach us what it takes for children to have a positive experience; the pilot projects will help California learn what it will take to implement the system and scale it up.

The Council's work will build on the work undertaken in the Competencies project and by CAEL QIS, moving each of them a significant and appropriate step toward statewide implementation.

²⁷ Extensive research has been done about the quality of California early education and care workforce, including reports by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at the University of California-Berkeley (<http://www.irle.berkeley.edu/csce/>). And in addition to the work of the Competencies project and CAEL QIS, the Advancement Project's Water Cooler project has a Workforce Development and Certification workgroup that has studied workforce issues and made recommendations (http://www.advancementprojectca.org/index.php?q=/c/resource/sc/ap_water_cooler). As the Council designs and implements its projects, it will consider work of these initiatives and others.

b. Specific Activities

Based on the Competencies and the work of CAEL QIS, the projects identified by the Council to implement QRIS include:

- Developing a common course of study for higher education based upon the Competencies, and designing a coherent professional development system that aligns to the Competencies and builds on recommendations made by CAEL QIS. The course of study also will be aligned to the Early Learning Foundations and its frameworks. The project may include a plan for a system that allows alternative providers to offer certain courses. This project will support the state's efforts to implement QRIS and increase the number of high-quality settings.
- QRIS pilot projects. These pilot projects will be guided by the final recommendations to be issued by CAEL QIS at the end of 2010. Based on recommendations from the RAND Corporation, the state may undertake "virtual piloting" using available databases, testing different design options based on existing data. The state will implement a full-scale, multi-site pilot of the QRIS system, with an embedded evaluation. The evaluation will include measuring the gains toward kindergarten readiness.
- While the lessons learned from the QRIS pilot and evaluation will provide valuable information to support a statewide rollout by state agencies and providers, the Council would like a specific focus on how the QRIS can be made meaningful to families – particularly families of those children identified as a priority for improved early childhood services. Accordingly, the Council will allocate funds to support focus groups with families to

develop recommendations on how the QRIS system can best be made accessible.

- In designing a pilot project, the Council will take into account numerous issues that will affect the scalability of the system design, including the system's ability to serve underrepresented and special populations. Ultimately the QRIS system must drive improvements in both quality and access to be successful.
- The Council will choose pilot sites in a manner that will maximize the impact of the pilot. Head Start and Early Head Start programs will be among those encouraged to seek participation in the pilot.

c. Budget Range

i. Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies

The recommended project in this area is to incorporate the newly developed Early Childhood Educator Competencies into the Early Childhood Education (ECE) course work of Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), and alternative providers – and to integrate them into the professional development activities identified in California's Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan. It would also ensure that California's early learning foundations, curriculum frameworks, and assessment system components are appropriately integrated into IHEs' ECE coursework and training content and teaching strategies of the CCDF professional development providers. This work will be instrumental in developing a coherent and articulated statewide system for educating and training our workforce and providing quality professional development.

In developing a budget for the Educator Competencies project, the Council has considered the work of the ECE competencies project, the Faculty Initiative Project, and a proposed budget for the Higher Education Council that includes California State Universities and community colleges. Based on materials from those efforts, the Council's project is estimated to cost \$1,163,269 over the next three years.

ii. Piloting QRIS elements

The proposal includes a budget of \$7,065,431 for piloting the QRIS system that will be fully designed by the end of 2010 and put forward by the CAEL QIS Advisory Committee. The pilot design will focus on field testing the implementation of the CAEL QIS-recommended system. The multi-site pilot will help the Council learn where the QRIS design may need to be adjusted, and how the implementation process might be streamlined and improved. The pilot will assess numerous factors, including how well the key QRIS components are being measured and implemented; the adequacy of staff ratios and group sizes; technical assistance, parent engagement, and other infrastructure elements for the system; improvements in kindergarten readiness; and the effectiveness of the compensation and incentive structure in driving higher levels of quality. Pilot results will supply lessons learned that might suggest changes to the design of the QRIS or to the scaling up of implementation.

At this time, it is impossible to prepare a detailed work plan for a pilot project, as CAEL QIS has not even completed its QRIS design recommendations. However, once the QRIS design is fully developed, the Council will engage with experts to design and implement a multi-site pilot that will focus on the key design and implementation questions posed by the final QRIS design. Based on the questions of interest, the pilot design will consider:

- the appropriate number, characteristics, and geographic distribution of the pilot sites;
- the information that needs to be collected, including information on child outcome data, program effectiveness, and practices and policies that lead to developmentally appropriate instruction; and
- the most appropriate statistical and analytic methods to employ given the type of data collected.

The \$7,065,431 budget is meant to provide sufficient resources to design and conduct a meaningful pilot. However, given the scope of CAEL QIS and the many different possible approaches to pilot design, that budget will not be enough for the pilot to answer all of the potential QRIS implementation questions. The Council will consider the work of CAEL QIS to determine which questions it believes are most important to address; the Council will then turn to designing and preparing the infrastructure for a pilot that will address those questions. The pilot will then continue for the rest of the three-year grant period.

In addition, a portion of these funds will be reserved to hold parent focus groups in pilot sites to discuss how parents can most successfully understand, access, and use the new QRIS system. Recommendations from those focus groups will be developed as the pilot project is being designed and rolled out, and integrated into the QRIS design and pilot process. The

process of gathering parent feedback will be run by a contractor with professional expertise in running focus groups and who is independent of the QRIS development process.

C. Conclusion

The Council has identified some approaches to allocating its grant that will allow it to maximize the impact of a relatively small pool of funds. The projects described here are intended to help the Council achieve its goal of using one-time funds in a manner that has long-term impact. Specifically, the grant outcomes will include:

- A comprehensive plan will allow all resource decisions to be informed by an agreed-upon idea of what the system should ultimately look like;
- A design for a unified data system is a critical step to the implementation of that system, which could have a far-reaching impact on how parents, educators, and policymakers support young children; and
- Tools to allow the state to implement its newly-designed Early Childhood Educator Competencies and QRIS system, including how to make the QRIS system easily accessible to parents.

It is important to emphasize that the grant activities will by no means represent the sum total of the Council's work. Even during the grant period, the Council will consider areas where it can make recommendations outside of the grant activities. The Council also is expected to be permanent, meaning that it anticipates learning lessons from its grant activities that can be developed into recommendations after the grant period – and that can inform its projects in the future. Throughout the process, the Council's role will be to set high-level direction for the work, to drive the comprehensive planning process, and to approve detailed implementation plans presented by staff as needed.

IV. Personnel, Budget, and Work Plan

A. Name/Agency Affiliation of Council Members

Name	Title	Agency	Federal Requirement Met
Geno Flores, Tri-Chair*	Chief Deputy	California Department of Education	Agency responsible for child care programs
Anne McKinney, Tri-Chair	Deputy Secretary	Office of the Secretary of Education	
Kris Perry, Tri-Chair	Executive Director	California Children and Families Commission	
Celia Ayala	Chief Operating Officer	Los Angeles Universal Preschool	
Ernest “Toby” Boyd*	Kindergarten Teacher	Elk Grove Unified School District	Representative of LEA
Joan Buchanan	Assembly Member	State Assembly	
Zulmara Cline*	Associate Director	California State University Chancellor’s Office	Institutions of Higher Education
Consuelo Espinosa	Infant/Toddler Specialist	WestEd	
Venus Garth	Chief	California Department of Social Services	
David W. Gordon*	Superintendent	Sacramento County Office of Education	Representative of LEA ²⁸
Jane Henderson*	Consultant		Health, mental health representative
David P. Lopez*	President	National Hispanic University (also Board Member, State Board of Education)	State Educational Agency representative
Cliff Marcussen*	Executive Director	Options – A Child Care and Human Services Agency	Local provider of early childhood education
Jeannie Oropeza	Program Budget Manager	California Department of Finance	
Nancy Remley*	Director	California Head Start Collaboration Office	State Head Start Collaboration Office
Lois Salisbury	Director	The David and Lucile Packard Foundation	
Dennis Vicars*	Chief Executive Officer	Human Services Management Corporation	Local provider of early childhood education
Sarah Younglove*	Director	Los Angeles County Office of Education	Local Head Start agency

*Membership on Council mandated by statute

²⁸ In addition to Ernest Boyd and David Gordon, Yolie Flores, Board Member, Los Angeles Unified School District, was initially appointed to the Council as an LEA representative. However, she resigned prior to the Council's July 13 meeting. Her replacement is pending.

B. Goals, Objective, Activities, and Timelines for Each Year of Grant (Three Years; Projections of Accomplishments)

The following chart explains the timeline (beginning October 2010), activities, and accomplishments for the work described in this application.

Quarter 1 - October 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Develop a Comprehensive Plan for an Integrated System	Prepare a Comprehensive Plan	ELAC develops vision statement for coordinated early childhood system Consultant hired to conduct meta-analysis of current system	Consultant contract completed
Connect with Children and Families	Unified Data Collection System	Write up request for procurement for a contractor to conduct a needs assessment	Hire the contractor (Oct 1, 2010- April 1, 2010)
Establish the QRIS to Improve the Quality of Early Learning Settings	Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies	Develop scope of work for extending the work of the Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) & the Baccalaureate Pathways to Early Childhood Education (BPECE) to include the integration of the ECE competencies into ECE coursework. Develop scope of work for Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies into the early learning (EL) professional development (PD) system	
	QRIS Pilot Projects	ELAC determines scope of work for pilot sites Staff develops RFP for pilot sites and for evaluation of pilots RFPs released	ELAC approves scope of work for pilots

Quarter 2 - January 1, 2011 to March 31, 2011

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Develop a Comprehensive Plan for an Integrated System	Prepare a Comprehensive Plan	ELAC discusses and approves vision statement Consultant conducts meta-analysis and develops baseline report	Vision statement approved
Connect with Children and Families	Unified Data Collection System	Council finalizes broad policy instructions for contractor, informed by work of CAEL QIS (identifying key policy needs of system) Continue staff work to hire contractor	Broad policy direction finalized
Establish the QRIS to Improve the Quality of Early Learning Settings	Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies	Present integration plan to ELAC Contracts for competencies integration in IHEs and EL PD system	Executed contracts
	QRIS Pilot Projects	Staff scores proposals and announces awards	Pilot sites and evaluator identified

Quarter 3 – April 1, 2011 to June 30, 2011

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Develop a Comprehensive Plan for an Integrated System	Prepare a Comprehensive Plan	<p>Begin planning for statewide public meetings regarding needs of young children & families (needs assessment)</p> <p>Consultant and staff draft outline of comprehensive plan to be used in public meetings</p> <p>ELAC reviews and approves draft outline of comprehensive plan</p>	Draft outline of comprehensive plan approved
Connect with Children and Families	Unified Data Collection System	<p>Contractor begins work which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying data collection requirements • Identifying data use requirements • Interviewing CDE staff and stakeholders • Proposed technological options to meet identified needs • Develop business rules on the issuance of the Unique Identifier (UI) • Providing status reports at agreed upon intervals 	
Establish the QRIS to Improve the Quality of Early Learning Settings	Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies	Begin integration process with the core eight classes and with first set of EL PD programs	
	QRIS Pilot Projects	Complete contracts to pilot sites and evaluation contractor	Contracts completed

Quarter 4 – July 1, 2011 to September 30, 2011

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Develop a Comprehensive Plan for an Integrated System	Prepare a Comprehensive Plan	ELAC and staff conduct series of focus groups and statewide public meetings on needs of families (needs assessment)	Statewide meetings initiated
Connect with Children and Families	Unified Data Collection System	Contractor continues work	
Establish the QRIS to Improve the Quality of Early Learning Settings	Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies	Continue with phase one of integration	
	QRIS Pilot Projects	Pilots begin Year One Evaluator begins work	Work begins in pilots

Quarter 5 – October 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Develop a Comprehensive Plan for an Integrated System	Prepare a Comprehensive Plan	ELAC and staff conduct series of focus groups and statewide public meetings on needs of families (needs assessment)	Statewide meetings completed
Connect with Children and Families	Unified Data Collection System	Contractor continues work	
Establish the QRIS to Improve the Quality of Early Learning Settings	Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies	Complete phase one of integration Present result of first phase to ELAC	Presentation to ELAC
	QRIS Pilot Projects	Pilots continue – update to ELAC	

Quarter 6 – January 1, 2012 to March 31, 2012

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Develop a Comprehensive Plan for an Integrated System	Prepare a Comprehensive Plan	Draft of Comprehensive Plan presented to ELAC	Draft comprehensive plan completed
Connect with Children and Families	Unified Data Collection System	Contractor continues work	
Establish the QRIS to Improve the Quality of Early Learning Settings	Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies	Begin phase two of integration	
	QRIS Pilot Projects	Pilots continue – update to ELAC	

Quarter 7 –April 1, 2012 to June 30, 2012

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Develop a Comprehensive Plan for an Integrated System	Prepare a Comprehensive Plan	Final staff and consultant work on Comprehensive Plan based on ELAC revisions	Comprehensive Plan approved
Connect with Children and Families	Unified Data Collection System		Contractor to provide a report containing recommendations
Establish the QRIS to Improve the Quality of Early Learning Settings	Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies	Continue phase two of integration	
	QRIS Pilot Projects	Pilots continue – update to ELAC	

Quarter 8 – July 1, 2012 to September 30, 2012

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Develop a Comprehensive Plan for an Integrated System	Prepare a Comprehensive Plan	ELAC presents final draft to the Governor, Senate Subcommittee on Early Learning, Assembly Education Committee, and/or any other appropriate legislative committees	ELAC plan considered by Governor and Legislature
Connect with Children and Families	Unified Data Collection System	Council to consider options presented by contractor	Council makes a recommendation on which option to pursue
Establish the QRIS to Improve the Quality of Early Learning Settings	Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies	Complete phase two Present results of second phase to ELAC	Presentation to ELAC
	QRIS Pilot Projects	Pilots continue – update to ELAC	

Quarter 9 – October 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Develop a Comprehensive Plan for an Integrated System	Prepare a Comprehensive Plan	Prepare draft package of legislative changes based on Comprehensive Plan	Council considers package of proposed changes
Connect with Children and Families	Unified Data Collection System	Pursue implementation of the recommended alternative to issue the UI Initiate discussions on any governance issues necessary to implement recommended alternative	
Establish the QRIS to Improve the Quality of Early Learning Settings	Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies	Begin phase three of integration	
	QRIS Pilot Projects	Evaluator's interim report on pilots submitted to ELAC	Interim report on pilots completed, submitted to ELAC

Quarter 10 – January 1, 2013 to March 31, 2013

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Develop a Comprehensive Plan for an Integrated System	Prepare a Comprehensive Plan	Package of legislative changes submitted for consideration	Draft legislation introduced
Connect with Children and Families	Unified Data Collection System		
Establish the QRIS to Improve the Quality of Early Learning Settings	Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies	Continue phase three of integration	
	QRIS Pilot Projects	Pilots continue – update to ELAC	

Quarter 11 – April 1, 2013 to June 30, 2013

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Develop a Comprehensive Plan for an Integrated System	Prepare a Comprehensive Plan	Legislature continues to consider proposed legislative changes	
Connect with Children and Families	Unified Data Collection System		
Establish the QRIS to Improve the Quality of Early Learning Settings	Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies	Complete phase three Present result of third phase to ELAC	Presentation to ELAC
	QRIS Pilot Projects	QRIS pilots end; evaluation report completed	Evaluation report completed

Quarter 12 – July 1, 2013 to September 30, 2013

Objective	Area	Activities	Accomplishments
Develop a Comprehensive Plan for an Integrated System	Prepare a Comprehensive Plan	Follow-up from any legislative changes adopted	
Connect with Children and Families	Unified Data Collection System		
Establish the QRIS to Improve the Quality of Early Learning Settings	Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies	Develop rubric for integration ECE competencies into future ECE coursework and EL PD activities	Rubric for integrating ECE competencies into future ECE coursework and EL PD activities
	QRIS Pilot Projects	Final report on QRIS pilots submitted to ELAC ELAC considers evaluation report; drafts recommendations for Legislature/Governor	Final recommendations on QRIS to Legislature and Governor

C. Plans for Needs Assessment, Public Hearings, SAC Meetings

The ELAC held two public hearings to receive testimony on the federal application due August 1, 2010, to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The strategic report (attached in the appendices) was used as the basis of the public hearings.

The first public hearing took place on June 21, 2010, at the Yolo County Office of Education, 1280 Santa Anita Court, Woodland, CA from 2:00 to 7:00 p.m. Council members present were Tri-Chair Kris Perry, Camille Maben (on behalf of the Superintendent of Public Instruction), Consuela Espinosa, Venus Garth, and Jeannie Oropeza. The second public hearing took place June 23, 2010, at the Los Angeles County Office of Education, 9300 Imperial Highway, Downey, CA from 2:00 to 7:00 p.m. Council members present were: Zee Cline, Cliff

Marcussen, Nancy Remley, Celia Ayala, and Sarah Younglove. In addition, members of the public had the opportunity to comment at the ELAC's three meetings this spring, which were held May 4, June 2, and July 13. The public also had the opportunity to provide written testimony to the CDE, with a deadline of June 25, 2010.

The ELAC received a total of 45 comments, and written comments were posted on-line.²⁹ While the overall thrust of the Council's plans has remained consistent throughout the public hearing process, the Council has made numerous substantive changes to its plans between the release of the strategic report and the filing of this application, based in large part on feedback received from the public and key stakeholders..

The chart below provides a general timeline for the needs assessment(s), public hearings, and meetings of the Council for the three years of the grant. A draft of the comprehensive plan will be completed by June 2011, and that draft will be the subject of public hearings and comment through the remainder of 2011. A draft will be presented to the Council for its consideration in February 2012, and the Council will approve the comprehensive plan in June 2012. The Comprehensive Plan will also be a subject of Council discussion at each of its meetings, and public comment will be taken at all of those meetings, in addition to the public hearings.

The Council will meet between four and six times per year. The Council is committed to the level of public engagement described in this application, but the exact scheduling of public hearings and Council meetings may be modified slightly during the course of the project to ensure optimal use of human and financial resources.

²⁹ <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/elac2010meetings.asp> ("Public Hearing Testimonies"); <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/testimonies.doc>.

Activity	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
	Oct.- Dec. 2010	Jan.- Mar. 2011	Apr.- June 2011	July- Sept. 2011	Oct.- Dec. 2011	Jan.- Mar. 2012	Apr.- June 2012	July- Sept. 2012	Oct.- Dec. 2012	Jan.- Mar. 2013	Apr.- June 2013	July- Sept. 2013
Needs Assessment Discussed by Council	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public Comment Opportunity on Needs Assessment (Public Hearing or ELAC meeting)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
ELAC Meetings	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

D. Partner Organizations, Entities, Consultants

The work described in this application, which will be informed and overseen by the Council, will be accomplished primarily by the California Department of Education, the Office of the Secretary of Education, First 5 California, and other consultants and entities to be named at a later date. The responsibilities of the other partners are described in more detail in the chart under “Goals, Objectives, and Activities.”

Expert consultants to be hired may include a consultant or consultants to assist with the development of a Comprehensive Plan, a consultant or consultants to collaborate on the development of a unified data system, a consultant or consultants to collaborate with integrating competencies, and potentially a consultant or consultants to assist with the pilot projects (depending on the final scope of that work). For each of these consultants, the terms of their agreement will be consistent with the requirements of this grant application.

E. Sustainability Plan

The Council's projects are designed primarily to be discrete projects that can be completed within the grant period.

- The Comprehensive Plan will be completed and released within the grant period. The content of the comprehensive plan will then inform a host of policy initiatives extending beyond the grant period, and of course the plan itself will need to be revised on a regular schedule. However, the initial work of creating the plan will not need to be sustained beyond the grant period.
- The development of a unified early childhood data system is a multi-phased process. The Council's grant will support the completion of a phase, and make recommendations for appropriate work to be undertaken in the future.
- The development of a common course of study aligned to the ECE Competencies can be completed within the grant period, and then the common course of study can be implemented on an ongoing basis thereafter as part of the regular work of the Council's higher education, training, and professional development partners.
- A pilot project of the CAEL QIS recommendations can be completed within the grant period, and the results will inform the subsequent implementation of the QRIS system.

F. Staff and Position Data

1. *Existing Staff Assigned to the Council*

Kathy Radtkey-Gaither of the Office of the Secretary of Education has been designated by Governor Schwarzenegger as the coordinator for the activities of the ELAC. Additional support for the ELAC's work will be provided by CDE, including Camille Maben, Cecelia

Fisher-Dahms, and Roberta Peck. Biographies of all four of these state personnel are provided in the appendices.

2. *Staff to be hired*

The following staff will be hired within the Office of the Secretary of Education using state funds provided by First 5 California through July 1, 2013 (which will be counted as part of the state's match):

- A full-time Executive Director, who will support ELAC chairs and members by:
 - managing ELAC meetings, including meeting agendas;
 - coordinating Council implementation of ELAC ARRA projects;
 - ensuring compliance with the Bagley-Keene Act, the Brown Act, and other relevant law;
 - writing the required long term strategic plan;
 - engaging key stakeholders and the public;
 - supporting ELAC subcommittee work;
 - managing ELAC's budget;
 - providing Council oversight on ARRA ELAC funded projects;
 - supervising ELAC staff; and
 - monitoring consultants hired through OSE.
- A full-time Deputy Executive Director, who will provide research support to the co-chairs, committee members, and executive director; engage with key stakeholders and the public on ELAC related work; and support in writing and editing ELAC materials, presentations, and communications.

- A full-time Executive Assistant, who will manage the executive director's and deputy executive director's schedules, take meeting minutes, administer contracts with consultants and vendors, coordinate scheduling and travel with ELAC chairs, members and staff, and take calls from the public.

G. Organizational Profile of Lead Agency

The Child Development Division is within the CDE. The division provides leadership and support to contractors and the child development community, ensuring high quality early education programs are provided to children ages birth to 13 years.

The child care and development system administered by the CDE continues to be the largest, most culturally diverse, and most comprehensive in the nation, with funding at over \$2.6 billion for fiscal year (FY) 2008–09. The CDE maintains 1,647 service contracts with 791 public and private agencies supporting and providing services to 492,432 children (FY 2006–07). Contractors include school districts, county offices of education, cities, local park and recreation districts, county welfare departments, other public entities, community-based organizations, and private agencies.

The CDE works collaboratively to develop a streamlined and consolidated state plan for early care and education services that meets the needs of California's families and children. This collaboration includes Head Start and Early Head Start through a federal grant to support the CDE's California Head Start State Collaboration Office. The CDE also works collaboratively with First Five California to improve the quality and availability of child care and development programs statewide.

Two other programs connect early childhood education, parental involvement, and family literacy services for families in California. These are the William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy and the American Indian Early Childhood Education programs.

Currently, more than a dozen CDE-administered programs meet the varied needs of California’s families. The eligibility for federally and state-subsidized services continues to be based primarily on income and need, with additional criteria depending on program type and funding source. The CDE is committed to maximizing parental choice of care and to improving the availability and quality of infant, preschool, and before- and after-school services. Services to children at risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation and children receiving protective services through county welfare departments remain a top priority. The CDE has also implemented several initiatives to support and assist child care and development programs to create welcoming and inclusive environments for children with exceptional needs.

H. Budget and Budget Narrative

Summary Table: Budget Expenditures Proposed for the Grant

Project	Budget
<i>Developing a comprehensive plan for an integrated system</i>	\$600,000
<i>Connecting with children and families</i>	
Unifying data to support parents and educators	\$1,825,248
<i>Establish the QRIS to improve the quality of early learning settings</i>	
Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies	\$1,163,269
Full QRIS pilot	\$7,065,431
Total	\$10,653,948

All of these expenditures can be utilized within the grant period, and in each instance, the projects will be designed to minimize any potential impact on services to children at the conclusion of the project. Clearly if these efforts are successful, California will need to consider

how best to sustain them, but all of the grant expenditures can nonetheless be treated as discrete activities to be completed within three years.

1. *Project Budget*

Category	Year 1 Amount	Comment	Year 2 Amount	Comment	Year 3 Amount	Comment	Total
Personnel	\$ 71,000	RPS II	\$ 71,000	RPS II	\$ 71,000	RPS II	\$ 213,000
Fringe	\$ 25,000	RPS II	\$ 25,000	RPS II	\$ 25,000	RPS II	\$ 75,000
Travel	\$ -	In kind	\$	In kind	\$	In kind	\$
Equipment	\$ -	In kind	\$	In kind	\$	In kind	\$
Supplies	\$ -	In kind	\$	In kind	\$	In kind	\$
<i>Comprehensive Plan</i>	\$ 400,020		\$ 199,980		\$ -		\$ 600,000
<i>Data</i>	\$ 550,000		\$ 550,000		\$ 550,000		\$ 1,650,000
<i>Integrating ECE Competencies</i>	\$ 387,756		\$ 387,756		\$ 387,757		\$ 1,163,269
<i>Full QRIS Pilot</i>	\$1,148,364		\$2,296,728		\$3,445,091		\$ 6,890,183
Contracts	\$2,486,140		\$3,434,464		\$4,382,848		\$ 10,303,452
Construction	\$	None	\$	None	\$	None	\$
Other	\$	In kind	\$	In kind	\$	In kind	\$
Total Direct	\$2,582,140		\$3,530,464		\$4,478,848		\$ 10,591,452
Indirect	\$ 20,832		\$ 20,832		\$ 20,832		\$ 62,496
Grand Total	\$2,602,972		\$3,551,296		\$4,499,680		\$ 10,653,948

Narrative:

1. Equipment

\$0

2. Supplies

\$0

3. Contracts

a. *Comprehensive Plan*

The Comprehensive Plan development is envisioned to occur in the first two years of the grant.

b. *Assigning unique identifiers*

This work will continue over the entire course of the grant.

c. *Developing a Coherent Preparation, Training, & Professional Development System Built on the ECE Competencies*

The scope of work for the existing CAP will be expanded to work in conjunction with the BPECE to include the integration of the ECE competencies into ECE coursework. A contract will be developed for integrating ECE competencies into the EL PD system. These will be divided into three phases.

d. *Full QRIS Pilot*

It is envisioned that the two-year pilots will begin July 1, 2011, with sites and scope to be determined by ELAC. The contract will include a concurrent evaluation process, with an Interim Report and a Final Report.

4. Total Direct Costs

\$10,591,452

5. Indirect Costs

\$62,496

6. TOTAL COST

Total costs including direct and indirect costs: **\$10,653,948.**

2. *Matching Funds*

The table below provides the level of matching funds expected through state spending on several projects identified as important to the Council's work. These projections all assume flat funding of the state's FY 2011 commitment. The state's total required match is \$24,859,252.

Matching Funds	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
ELAC Staff and activities	█ █████	█ █████	█ █████	█████
Professional development	█ █████	█ █████	█ █████	█████
Child Care Retention	█████	█████	█████	█████
Local Child Care Planning Councils	█ █████	█ █████	█ █████	█████
State Preschool	█████	█████	█████	█████
Total	█████	█████	█████	█████

ELAC Staff and ELAC activity funds support the California ELAC members, meetings, and committee meeting work.

The Professional Development funds support two activities identified in section II.C.b. of the application: the Child Development Training Consortium and the Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP). The \$250,000 in CCIP funding requires a local two to one match.

The Child Care Retention funds support the retention of qualified staff that work directly with children in state-subsidized centers.

Local Child Care Planning Council funds are used to assess the child care service needs in each county and to set priorities for child care funding.

State Preschool funds support preschool services to income eligible three- and four-year-olds as described in section II.A.1. Total funding for state preschool is over \$438 million; this smaller

number is used as to represent the fact that a portion of the program's funding supports the quality improvement goals of the ELAC.

ELAC APPLICATION APPENDICES

A. Designation Letters

1. Letter from Governor Schwarzenegger designating the California Department (CDE) of Education as the lead agency
2. Letter from Governor Schwarzenegger designating Kathryn Radtkey-Gaither, Undersecretary, Office of the Secretary of Education, as the coordinator of the Council

B. Organizational Profile

1. Organizational Chart of CDE, Child Development Division
2. Overview of the Child Development Division
3. Staff Biographies

C. Council's Authorizing Executive Order

D. Certification Regarding Lobbying

E. Proof of Federally Regulated Indirect Cost Rate

Strategic Report