Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services

Federal Fiscal Year 2013 (State Fiscal Year 2014)

Competitive Grant Review Criteria

Building Bridges:

Building Infrastructure to Support A Local Seamless Birth Through Five Comprehensive & Coordinated System of Services

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PROPOSAL

Local School System/Local Lead Agency:

Proposal Title:

Additional Information:

Reviewer's Name:
Date:

SCORE SUMMARY

Section	Maximum Score	Reviewer's Score
Proposal Cover Sheet	1	
Table of Contents	4	
Project Abstract	10	
Extend of Need	10	
Goals, Objectives, & Implementation	15	
Management Plan	15	
Integration with Educational Reform	10	
Evaluation & Dissemination	10	
Future Plans	10	
Budget Narrative	10	
Signed Assurances	5	
TOTAL SCORE	**100**	

__Approved   __Conditional   __Disapproved

I. Proposal Requirements:

All proposals must meet the following requirements to be considered for funding. Please check off the requirements met by this proposal.

❑ *Maryland Teacher Professional Development Grant Requirements*

Please note: *__If the activities in the grant include professional development for school system teaching staff, the following components are additional required elements.__*

Planned professional development descriptors must include how and which of the following Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards (as appropriate) are addressed. These descriptors should be included within the "Plan of Operation."

❑ Standard 1: **Quality teaching**-Effective professional development deepens all teachers' content knowledge and the knowledge and skills necessary to provide effective instruction and assess student progress.
❑ Standard 2: **Research-based**-Effective professional development ensures that all teachers have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to apply research to decision making.
❑ Standard 3: **Collaboration**-Effective professional development ensures that teachers have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to collaborate with others to improve instruction.
❑ Standard 4: **Diverse learning needs**- Effective professional development ensures that all teachers have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to meet the diverse learning needs of all of their students.
❑ Standard 5: **Student learning environments**- Effective professional development ensures that all teachers are able to create safe, secure, and supportive learning environments for all students.
❑ Standard 6: **Family involvement**- Effective professional development ensures that all teachers have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to involve families and other community members as active partners in their children's education.
❑ Standard 7: **Data-driven**- Effective teacher professional development relies on rigorous analysis of data.
❑ Standard 8: **Evaluation**- Rigorous evaluations assess the impact of professional development on teaching and student learning.
❑ Standard 9: **Design and teacher learning**-Effective professional development content and process reflect best practices in workplace learning and in-depth understanding of how and why adults learn.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

II. Grant Proposal Detail

The *Building Bridges Grant Initiative* was established to serve as a catalyst for local jurisdictions to build the infrastructure supporting a seamless ***birth through five*** comprehensive & coordinated system of services for young children with disabilities and their families. The Building Bridges Grant Initiative provides an opportunity for local Infants and Toddlers Programs (LITP), local school systems (LSS), and other community-based early care and education partners to collaborate in the design and implementation of a local birth through five system of services. The locally designed and implemented birth through five system of services would demonstrate exemplary processes and practices and serve as a model for other jurisdictions in Maryland.

Five priority areas have been identified for the Building Bridges Grant Initiative:

- **Natural Environments/Least Restrictive Environments:** increase the local continuum of regular early childhood settings that provide opportunities for children with disabilities, ages birth through five, served under an IFSP, Extended IFSP or IEP to participate with their typically developing peers or in home or community settings where children without disabilities typically are found (SPP Indicators C2 & B6);
- **Child Outcomes:** improve results for children with disabilities, ages birth through five, served under an IFSP, Extended IFSP or IEP, in relation to age-appropriate expectations established for their typically developing peers, through increasing the capacity of early care and education providers, teachers, and related services personnel to differentiate instruction, adapt and modify curricula, and incorporate evidence-based practices into intervention and instructional programs (SPP Indicators C3 & B7);
- **Early Childhood Transitions:** provide information and support to families and children with disabilities, ages birth through five, served under an IFSP, Extended IFSP or IEP, to ensure a smooth transition from Infants and Toddlers to preschool, from preschool to kindergarten, and from kindergarten to first grade (SPP Indicators C8 & B12);
- **Family Outcomes/Parent Involvement:** engage and support families/parents as full partners in the provision of services to their child served under an IFSP, Extended IFSP or IEP; and
- **School Readiness:** improve the percentage of children with disabilities reported as *fully ready* for school as measured by the annual Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR) kindergarten assessment system; thereby, narrowing the existing school readiness gap between children with disabilities and their typically developing peers (SPP Indicator B7).
- **Partnerships:** expand and strengthen partnerships between and among public and private early care and education providers to improve outcomes for children, ages birth through five, and their families.

Proposal Submission

Local school systems and local lead agencies are designated as the lead agencies for submitting proposals that meet minimum grant requirements as specified in the Building Bridges Grant Initiative Request for Proposals (BB RFP). A written and signed local memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the local Infants and Toddlers program and the local school system must be included as an attachment to the original proposal submission. Additionally formalized letters of agreement from all participating early childhood partners are required and must clearly define the commitment and clarify the role of each agency and must be also be attached. Technical assistance regarding additional specifications for the BB RFP, as well as project design is available through the Early Childhood Intervention and Education Branch (ECIE)(see Support and Technical Assistance Schedule and also upon local requests). The RFP

and supporting documents will be distributed by the ECIE Branch in collaboration with the Special Education Administration Policy Branch, Grants Program Management Section.

- ❑ Signed and dated assurances
- ❑ Proposal Narrative
- ❑ Evaluation Plan
- ❑ Budget narrative
- ❑ Budget Detail and Budget Page signed by the agency's finance manager

<u>NOTE</u>: As discretionary grants are not intended to provide a long term funding solution, but rather are intended as an incentive for developing a birth through five system of services while implementing evidence-based practices and effective programs, please make note of the following considerations:

- Continuation of funding for grant projects previously funded under the SFY 2011 Early Childhood Links Grant (EC Links) will not be eligible under the Building Bridges Grant Initiative *due to the change in purpose of the Building Bridges Grant Initiative*;
- A jurisdiction awarded funding under the EC Links Grant Initiative may submit a proposal for the Building Bridges Grant Initiative; however the *proposal submitted must focus on designing, implementing and sustaining an infrastructure to support a seamless birth through five comprehensive & coordinated system of services*;
- Proposals must demonstrate, through a local memorandum of understanding, letters of commitment and by project design, a strong formal partnership between the local Infants and Toddlers Program, the local school system, early childhood community partners, and families; and

III. Proposal Priorities

Proposals must:

- Include a plan for the design, implementation and sustainability of a local seamless birth through five comprehensive & coordinated system of services;
- Provide evidence of a strong and active partnership between the local Infants and Toddlers Program and the local school system, *as stated in a written and signed local memorandum of understanding (MOU) attached to the proposal*;
- Provide a joint budget narrative and plan between the local Infants and Toddlers program and the local school system;
- Provide a description of committed in-kind resources inclusive of all local early childhood partners to support the building of a birth through five service delivery infrastructure.
- Include a description of how data-driven decision-making tools will be used to improve the identification and implementation of effective strategies to improve intervention/teaching, learning, and leadership practices.
- Include formal letters of agreement between each local early childhood community partner such as Early Head Start, Head Start, Judy Center Partnerships, community child care programs, libraries, Departments of Social Services, Departments of Health, and other local early care and education agencies and programs;
- Clearly define each agency's/partner's role, responsibilities and intended outcomes;
- Present a structured system of communication among partners;
- Describe how the system of services will be coordinated, and by whom; and
- Describe how results will be measured.

IV. General Comments:

In determining the significance of the proposed project, consider the following factors:

1. The likelihood that the proposed project will result in building of a local seamless birth through five infrastructure to support a comprehensive and coordinated system of services for children with disabilities and their families;
2. The potential contribution of the proposed project to increase knowledge or understanding of effective approaches to/strategies for collaborative decision-making that supports a system change process.
3. The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project.

V. Proposal Scoring Components

A. Proposal Cover Sheet -1 Point

The information must be clearly stated in the following order:
- Name of applicant.
- Title of project.
- The words "State Discretionary"
- Contact person.
- Address of contact person.
- Telephone, facsimile, and email numbers of contact person.
- Project partners.
- Amount requested.
- Dated signature of Superintendent of Schools/Head of Grantee Agency.

The cover should be printed on plain white paper and contain no graphics. Additional information should not be included on the proposal cover sheet.

General Strengths:

General Weaknesses:

Rating Scale:

Marginal (lacks sufficient information. Requires clarification or additional information)	**Adequate** (clear and complete)	**Superior** (Meets adequate standard. Extends standards to a superior level)
0.10 – 0.24 point	**0.25 - 0.49 point**	**0.5 -1 point**

Points Assigned: _____

B. Table of Contents [1 page] 4 Points

The table of contents is an important aid for the reader. When writing your proposal and constructing your table of contents, please use the following conventions:

- The cover sheet is not numbered but is considered to be page " i " (lower case, Roman numeral one).
- The abstract is number " ii " (lower case, Roman numeral two).
- The table of contents is not listed as one of the pages in the table of contents.
- Table of contents pages are numbered iii, iv etc.
- The extent of need is the first page of the project narrative and is numbered "1". Subsequent pages of the Project Narrative are numbered consecutively.
- The budget is numbered as follows: "B-1, B-2, B-3 ..."

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Rating Scale:

Marginal (lacks sufficient information. Requires clarification or additional information)	**Adequate** (clear and complete)	**Superior** (Meets adequate standard. Extends standards to a superior level)
0.25 – 0.99 point	**1 – 2 points**	**3 - 4 point**

Points Assigned: _____

C. Project Abstract [250 word limit] 10 Points

The project abstract is your first opportunity to introduce your project to the reader. It should be factual, concise, and focused on your efforts.

Criteria:

- Open with a powerful statement as to why this project should be funded.
- Identify partners and the nature of their roles.
- Describe how the infrastructure will be coordinated, who will take the lead, how the communication will be structured, and results measured.
- Identify which areas of need will be addressed and the measurable goal(s) to address the project (think with the end of the grant period in mind when developing the goal).
- Describe how local data driven decision making has influenced the design of the local birth through five system, and further how it will demonstrate effective accountability measures.
- Describe how the project will support parent leadership and family engagement resulting in informed parents leading to effective decision making in support their child's school readiness results.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Rating Scale:

Marginal (lacks sufficient information. Requires clarification or additional information)	**Adequate** (clear and complete)	**Superior** (Meets adequate standard. Extends standards to a superior level)
0-3 points	**4-7 points**	**7-10 points**

Points Assigned: _____

D. Extent of Need -10 Points

A compelling proposal will have a clearly defined purpose illustrated by reviewing local data results. A needs assessment is a systematic review of information collected from a variety of sources, analyzed to determine the how building infrastructure for a local seamless birth through five system of comprehensive and coordinated services will not only address, but improve local data results.

- Cite your current local data results for Part C and Part B 619

    o Child outcomes (B7/C3)
    o Least restrictive environments/natural environments (B6/C2)
    o C to B transition (B12/C8)
    o Family/Parent Survey results (B8/C4)
    o Maryland Model for School Readiness results
    o Other local data results such as assessments, evaluations from professional development or family activities that identify gaps or needs currently not being met.

- Describe the challenges your local jurisdiction currently faces as a result of not functioning as a seamless birth through five comprehensive and coordinated system of services in terms of:
    o Programmatic
    o Fiscal
    o Personnel

- Review the local and state parent information calls or filed local or state complaints, as well as seek input from your local Family Support Network Coordinator, Preschool Partners Coordinator and Partners for Success Coordinator to determine what families in your jurisdiction think about the process, practices and outcomes.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Rating Scale:

Marginal (lacks sufficient information. Requires clarification or additional information)	**Adequate** (clear and complete)	**Superior** (Meets adequate standard. Extends standards to a superior level)
0-3 points	**4-7 points**	**7-10 points**

Points Assigned: _____

E. Goals, Objectives and Implementation 15 Points

Criteria:
- ❑ Goal(s), objective(s) are clearly stated.
- ❑ Goal(s), objective(s) are measurable.
- ❑ Goal(s), objective(s) provide a local baseline of comparison by which to judge progress (Section D).
- ❑ Goal(s), objective(s) are both ambitious and realistic.
- ❑ Goal(s) have long-term deadlines.
- ❑ Objectives have annual deadlines.
- ❑ Objectives measure progress towards the goal(s).
- ❑ Strategies and activities are broad approaches (methods, procedures, techniques) employed to accomplish all the objectives that will ultimately meet the goal.

This section should:

- Explain how local school system and local lead agency will build a local infrastructure that supports a birth through five seamless, comprehensive system of coordinated services for children with disabilities and their families; and
- How this infrastructure through design and collaboration will improve local data results on identified indicators in the Part C and Part B State Performance Plans (C2/B6, C3/B7, C8/B12, and C4/B8);
- Explain how results will improve for young children with disabilities and narrow the performance gap with non-disabled peers on critical school readiness knowledge and skills (MMSR Assessment);
- Explain how capacity will increase through collaboration of community, school-linked or school-based early childhood programs/settings to expand options and opportunities for participation of children and students with disabilities in the Natural Environment (NE) and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE);
- Explain how early childhood transition practices for young children with disabilities and their families will support family cohesiveness and continuity of early care and education experiences within a birth through five system of services;
- Explain how building capacity for families to support their child's school readiness and to make informed developmental/educational decisions and engaging families as full partners through full access, active participation & support will occur in your local birth through five system of services; and
- Describe how family/parent survey results will improve through your project.

Comments: Outcomes are statements that state what the project hopes to accomplish. Good outcomes are essential if a project is to demonstrate success. Outcomes consist of goals, objectives, and milestones. Outcomes reference easily quantified indicators such as: test scores, absenteeism, grades, promotion rates, pre and post survey results, etc. The following five elements should be found in every outcome statement: (1) a quantifiable level of success; (2) a specific deadline for completion; (3) a clearly identified target population(s) to be served and evaluated; (4) a baseline of State, local, or school defined data or standards, by which to judge how ambitious and realistic the objective is; (5) an evaluation tool by which to measure progress.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Rating Scale:

Marginal (lacks sufficient information. Requires clarification or additional information)	**Adequate** (clear and complete)	**Superior** (Meets adequate standard. Extends standards to a superior level)
0-5 points	**6-10 points**	**11-15 points**

Points Assigned: _____

F. Management Plan/Key Personnel -15 Points

A management plan describes, schedules, and assigns responsibilities for all the actions necessary to carry out and support the implementation and evaluation plans of the proposal. Partners and major stakeholders should be included in the plan. A management plan worksheet provides a detailed project narrative with all major management actions, dates, and persons responsible. Timelines are an important aspect of the management plan.

Criteria:
- ❑ Identifies all partners and establishes their roles, responsibilities and contributions to the project.
  - ❑ Includes a local Memorandum of Understanding between the Infants & Toddlers and the local school system (required).
  - ❑ Includes letters of agreement from all community early childhood partners (required).
- ❑ If appropriate, establishes a steering committee with representatives from all the major stakeholders groups, lists their duties, sets their meeting dates at least quarterly, and lists the members with their expertise or utilizes an existing steering committee or advisory board that includes all the key representatives.
- ❑ Lists of all key personnel with descriptions of their duties, qualifications, and percentages of time dedicated to the project.
  - ❑ Identifies a project coordinator(s) responsible for oversight of the implementation of the proposal.
- ❑ Presents a clear organizational structure with an adequate management system;
- ❑ Clearly describes project documentation to be maintained and submission of required progress reports.
- ❑ Includes a detailed management plan worksheet, listing all major management actions, assigning responsibility for each action, and assigning dates for each action.
- ❑ Timeline contains all key elements from the implementation, management and evaluation plan.
- ❑ Timeline is presented in the form of a Gantt chart.
- ❑ Timeline demonstrates adequate scheduling for the completion of all tasks.

The following is a template for the Management Plan Worksheet.

Table 4. Management Plan Worksheet		
Action Description	**Date**	**Person Responsible**
Brief Description #1	*Date*	*Name or Position*
Brief Description #2	*Date*	*Name or Position*
Brief Description #3	*Date*	*Name or Position*

Funder's Requirements		
Progress Report #1 Due	*Date*	*Name or Position*
On site visit scheduled	*Date*	*Name or Position*
On site visit Report due	*Date*	*Name or Position*
Final Evaluation Process	*Date*	*Name or Position*
Financial Report Due	*Date*	*Name or Position*
Annual Evaluation Due	***Date***	*Name or Position*

The following is a GANTT chart with month columns representing the first funding cycle. It should contain three sections containing key elements from the project's plan for management, implementation and evaluation.

Table 5. Project Timeline (Gantt Chart)																
	Month															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Management																
Designate Project Coordinator	X															
Implementation																
Collaboration meetings		X			X			X			X					
Evaluation																
Submit Final Evaluation																X

- ❑ Timeline contains all key elements from the implementation, management and evaluation plan and is presented in the form of a Gantt chart (See Table 5).
- ❑ Timeline demonstrates adequate scheduling for the completion of all tasks.
- ❑ Adequately completed Table 4.
- ❑ Adequately completed Table 5.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Rating Scale:

Marginal (lacks sufficient information. Requires clarification or additional information)	**Adequate** (clear and complete)	**Superior** (Meets adequate standard. Extends standards to a superior level)
0-5 points	**6-10 points**	**11-15 points**

Points Assigned: _____

G. Integration with Educational Reform 10 Points

This section should present a discussion of how the project is part of the bigger picture, how it is aligned with the goals, efforts, and plans of federal, state, and local governments.

Criteria:
- ❑ Describes how the project supports state and national standards and initiatives.
- ❑ Describes how the project supports local standards and initiatives.
- ❑ Describes how this project enhances and shares resources with current efforts or projects.
- ❑ Describes data and/or evidence that support your project.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Rating Scale:

Marginal (lacks sufficient information. Requires clarification or additional information)	**Adequate** (clear and complete)	**Superior** (Meets adequate standard. Extends standards to a superior level)
0-3 points	**4-7 points**	**8-10 points**

Points Assigned: _____

H. Evaluation and Dissemination Plan 10 Points

Grantees are required to submit (2) Interim and (1) Final progress reports.

Your evaluation plan should be consistent with the goal and objective(s). Keep in mind that the final evaluation will consider the entire project, beginning to end. The evaluation should not be viewed as what is done after the project's completion, but as an integral element in the project's design, planning, and implementation.

Criteria:
- Describe how, when, and by whom, the project will be evaluated. When discussing those responsible for evaluating the project, include the qualifications of the evaluators.
- Specifies ongoing and final evaluations that analyze results and compare them to baselines, milestones, objectives and final goals/outcomes, who will complete the analysis, why the project succeeded or failed and how it will be shared with stakeholders.
- Describe the type of data and method of data collection to be used to evaluate the project. Discuss the funds allocated to the collection and reporting of the data. Include information about personnel required to collect, analyze and report the data.
- Uses appropriate methods that measure progress towards achieving milestones and objectives and measures relevant outcomes at the end of the project period. This should include tools used to measure change throughout the project, which are established for the specific purpose of enhancing effectiveness.
- Describes all evaluation activities, assigns responsibility for each, and specifies the qualifications of evaluators.
- Identifies all major internal and external stakeholders to have input in the development of the evaluation, participation in the implementation of the evaluation process, and the establishment of appropriate methods of disseminating results.
- Specifies dates of submission and what will be included in quarterly, annual, and comprehensive final reports including interim data collected that assesses progress toward established outcomes.
- Clearly demonstrates alignment with State Professional Development Standards (See Maryland Professional Development Planning Guide) http://marylandpublicschools.org (Under *Highlights* see *Teacher Professional Development*.)
- Specifies the budget and resource allocations necessary to support the evaluation and dissemination process.
- Provide details on how the project and its results will be disseminated. Describe the major stakeholder groups that will be interested in the project and how the information will be disseminated. Also provide descriptions of the types of reports and other products that will be produced to reflect the project and its results (a minimum of one report must be submitted at the end of the grant period).

Rating Scale:

Marginal (lacks sufficient information. Requires clarification or additional information)	**Adequate** (clear and complete)	**Superior** (Meets adequate standard. Extends standards to a superior level)
0-3 points	**4-7 points**	**8-10 points**

Points Assigned: _____

I. Future Plans (Sustainability)   10 Points

Describe your plans for how a local seamless birth through five comprehensive & coordinated system of services will be sustained beyond the end of the grant funding period. How will you sustain the project after funding ends? What are your plans for maintaining the project's partnerships?

Criteria:
- ❑ Demonstrates commitment for funding successful elements of the project.
- ❑ Demonstrates partners' dedication to maintaining an active partnership beyond the grant period.
- ❑ Demonstrates that successful elements of the project will continue past the grant period.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Rating Scale:

Marginal (lacks sufficient information. Requires clarification or additional information)	**Adequate** (clear and complete)	**Superior** (Meets adequate standard. Extends standards to a superior level)
0-3 points	**4-7 points**	**8-10 points**

Points Assigned: _____

J. Budget Narrative   10 Points

Criteria:
- ❑ Provides a joint budget narrative from the local Infants & Toddlers program and the local school system justifying all expenses not clearly justified in the project narrative.
- ❑ Presents an explanation as to how all costs are reasonable and within current market value.
- ❑ Presents an adequate explanation as to the cost-effectiveness of the budget.
- ❑ Organizes line items by the appropriate budget categories (i.e. "objects"), and provide totals for each category.
- ❑ Contains <u>no</u> vague line items. All line items are for specific expenses.
- ❑ All line items contain the calculations used to derive the expected cost.
- ❑ Covers all expenses implied or stated in the project narrative and budget narrative.
- ❑ Includes only those expenses clearly stated in the project narrative or budget narrative.
- ❑ Presents all requested funds and in-kind contributions for the total cost of the project.
- ❑ Follows the prescribed format (see RFP).
- ❑ Indirect costs are calculated at a reasonable rate.
- ❑ Budget contains <u>no</u> mathematical errors.
- ❑ Provides a description of in-kind resources committed by the local Infants and Toddlers Program and the local school system, and community early childhood partners to support the building of a birth through five service delivery infrastructure.

Comments: Both the project narrative and budget describe the entire project. Everything in the project narrative must be reflected in the project budget. All line items should be justified in the budget narrative or the project narrative. A budget chart details the project's expenses. Each expense is called a "line item" and these are grouped in categories called "objects." Each "line item" must contain the following information: Description of the expense; method of calculation; and the amount requested. There should be no vague budget requests.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Rating Scale:

Marginal (lacks sufficient information. Requires clarification or additional information)	**Adequate** (clear and complete)	**Superior** (Meets adequate standard. Extends standards to a superior level)
0-3 points	**4-7 points**	**8-10 points**

Points Assigned: _____

K. Signed Assurances 5 Points

Criteria:

Assurances signed and dated by appropriate required personnel, including the Director of the local Infants and Toddlers program and the Superintendent of the local school system.

Rating Scale:

Marginal (lacks sufficient information. Requires clarification or additional information)	**Adequate** (clear and complete)	**Superior** (Meets adequate standard. Extends standards to a superior level)
0-1 points	**2-3 points**	**4-5 points**

Points Assigned: _____