Project Narrative

Introduction. In this project narrative, Ohio will describe the current landscape of early childhood, both for children with disabilities and their families, as well as for educators. In doing so, the narrative will identify an opportunity to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of our youngest children with disabilities through an Early Childhood Inclusive Leadership Fellowship program. This proposed project, which will be created and deployed with these grant funds, will provide a year-long learning experience followed by a year-long mentoring experience for professionals in Early Intervention or Special Education serving children Birth through grade three. Professionals already working in these systems will be from identified high-risk areas of the state and ultimately leave the two-year project with enhanced skills, knowledge, and
leadership capacity so that they can impact the development and education of children with disabilities and their families in meaningful and intentionally positive ways.

Ohio proposes accomplishing this project through a series of grant activities, including engaging partners who are experienced and well-positioned in the early childhood systems across the state. Based on a conceptual framework that focuses on inclusive instructional and organizational leadership, capacity building through professional capital, and inclusive instructional practices; Ohio will complete the project with forty-four professionals across three cohorts during the grant period. By collecting process and outcomes measures, we will engage in a rigorous evaluation of all activities, processes, and products. In the end, Ohio will use these data to determine how the Fellowship could be improved and expanded beyond the participating cohorts such that we can follow improvements in teaching, student achievement, and educational experiences for our students with disabilities.

**Section 1: Significance**

**Significance: The Landscape of Early Childhood in Ohio.** Many children in Ohio are faced with adversity beginning at birth. With one of the worst infant mortality rates in the nation (6.9%), our Black infants are at double the risk (13.9%) of their White counterparts (5.4%) for dying before their first birthday ([2018 Ohio Infant Mortality Report](https://2018OhioInfantMortalityReport)). Ohio has a locally administered human services system with over 11,000,000 residents living in 88 counties. With the 11 million residents, an estimated 807,175 are children birth to age five. In Ohio, 23.2% of children in the first five years of life live at or below 100% Federal Poverty Level (FPL), a rate of poverty that is higher than that of all persons living in Ohio (14.0%) or the nation (13.4%). Half of all children in Ohio live at or
below 200% FPL (2019 Ohio Poverty Report). In total, there are an estimated 403,587 children not yet in school at risk of going hungry, living in unsafe or inadequate housing, and/or who are living with unaddressed health, mental health or dental needs.

Significance: The Landscape of Early Childhood for Children with Disabilities in Ohio. The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) serves as the lead agency for the state’s Early Intervention (EI) program, which fulfils Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and serves children birth through age three with disabilities. In Ohio, the overwhelming majority of EI services, other than service coordination, is provided and funded by county boards of developmental disabilities. DODD provides a combination of state and federal funding for EI service coordination, evaluation, and assessment to a single agency in each county. During 2019, local county EI programs received, on average, more than 2,700 EI referrals per month. In the same time period, local EI programs served more than 24,000 children, averaging nearly 11,600 infants and toddlers at any given point in time.

Children eligible and enrolled in Early Intervention typically receive the majority of their EI services in their homes (94.24%), while very few receive the majority of their EI services in community settings (4.19%) like inclusive childcare. Early Head Start grantees report that 9.91% of the children they serve from birth – age three have a disability and an Individualized Family Service Plan. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the state’s Child Care Development Block Grant administrator, reports that providers across Ohio only requested the Special Needs payment for 435 children with disabilities in 2019. This amounts to less than 1% of children in Publicly Funded
Child Care and does not reflect the known prevalence of disabilities within the state for children, demonstrating significant under-utilization of the payment option.

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services oversees mental health professionals who provide Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation to early care and education programs where young children are experiencing challenging behavior. With a single phone call, an early care and education provider can receive help and consultation from a licensed mental health professional who is trained in early childhood. This program has had the effect of reducing suspensions and expulsions and increasing provider confidence in handling the continuum of behaviors they encounter with children in preschool.

In preschool special education, public schools served 30,764 three to five-year-old children with disabilities on Individualized Education Programs in 2019. In Ohio's publicly funded preschool, 10.6% of children have a disability while 9.1% of the children served in a Head Start do. Of those in the state’s public-school system, 71.4% of children age three through five with an Individualized Education Program attend a regular early childhood program where they receive the majority of their services; while 18.4% attend preschool in a separate class, school, or facility.

In special education, Ohio served 275,267 students with disabilities between ages 3 and 21 in 2019, with the age three through grade three population comprising 32.6% (93,005) of the total students served under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

As cohorts of children enter public or community school in Ohio as kindergarten students (approximately 120,000) each year, they take part in the Kindergarten
Readiness Assessment (KRA). The KRA is a comprehensive one-time entry assessment covering skills, knowledge and behaviors across four essential domains of school readiness. Statewide, 40.9% of children score in the highest performance category, demonstrating readiness. When we disaggregate this, only 15.2% of children with a disability are demonstrating readiness compared to 44.7% of children without a disability. These data are critical. A recent cohort analysis showed that children demonstrating readiness at kindergarten entry in Ohio are seven and nine times more likely to score proficient or higher in reading and math in grade three, respectively.

Beyond kindergarten, 63.3% of our students with disabilities age 6 – 21 are inside the regular classroom 80% or more of the day. Data from kindergarten through grade 12 demonstrate performance gaps on all state assessments, at every grade level, and in every academic subject between our students with and without disabilities. Finally, while 71% of all students with disabilities graduate in Ohio, 78% of these students meet graduation requirements set forth by their Individualized Education Program team rather than regular diploma standards. This landscape illustrates a fragmented system of educational outcomes between our students with and without disabilities, and it is not due to a larger population of students with severe cognitive disabilities. It is, we posit, rooted in the landscape of teaching and leading students with disabilities in Ohio which leads to graduating students who are set apart from their peers without a regular diploma.

Significance: The Landscape of Teaching and Leading Early Intervention and Special Education in Ohio. There are 356 credentialed Early Intervention service coordinators and 310 credentialed developmental specialists supporting Ohio’s infants
and toddlers with disabilities. Local county boards of developmental disabilities, the primary provider of early intervention services in the state, employ more than 100 speech language pathologists and 120 occupational and physical therapists (full-time equivalents). These professionals serve an average of 11,600 infants, toddlers, and their families any given day.

In the public-school system, there are over 12,000 special education teachers and paraprofessionals supporting children age three to 21. To better understand the daily experience of general and special education teachers, administrators, and service personnel, Ohio conducted a statewide survey in March 2019. That survey, with over 7,150 respondents, showed that teachers, administrators and service providers need professional development opportunities that are relevant to their work with children with disabilities. Only 24.2 percent of respondents agreed with the following statement: *My school’s professional development days address the specific needs of educators working with students in special education.* Principals/assistant principals and district administrators had higher levels of agreement relative to participants in other roles.

![Chart showing percentage of participants across different roles with their agreement levels.]

- **General Education Teacher:**
  - Strongly Agree: 16.6%
  - Agree: 26.5%
  - Neither: 34.7%
  - Disagree: 17.2%
  - Strongly Disagree: 17.2%

- **Intervention Specialist:**
  - Strongly Agree: 14.9%
  - Agree: 18.0%
  - Neither: 33.4%
  - Disagree: 29.6%
  - Strongly Disagree: 17.2%

- **Principal/Assistant Principal:**
  - Strongly Agree: 7.3%
  - Agree: 38.8%
  - Neither: 26.7%
  - Disagree: 21.2%
  - Strongly Disagree: 17.2%

- **District Administrator:**
  - Strongly Agree: 9.1%
  - Agree: 39.4%
  - Neither: 24.0%
  - Disagree: 22.3%
  - Strongly Disagree: 17.2%

- **Service Provider:**
  - Strongly Agree: 18.0%
  - Agree: 23.8%
  - Neither: 28.9%
  - Disagree: 21.6%
  - Strongly Disagree: 17.2%

- **Disabilities Coordinator:**
  - Strongly Agree: 6.2%
  - Agree: 24.6%
  - Neither: 31.3%
  - Disagree: 28.2%
  - Strongly Disagree: 17.2%

- **Other:**
  - Strongly Agree: 18.2%
  - Agree: 25.7%
  - Neither: 31.6%
  - Disagree: 16.3%
  - Strongly Disagree: 17.2%
Selecting from a list of learning topics, the most commonly selected topics that educators identified as most needed were in differentiation, evidence-based language and literacy instructional practices, and multi-tiered systems of supports. For those responding that they work in an elementary school, the most frequently selected responses as “most needed” were co-planning and co-teaching, flexible assessment design, trauma-informed classroom and school practices, and inclusive practices.

In May 2019, we explored the education experience further with teachers across the tenure spectrum when 74 general or special education teachers participated in one of ten focus groups. When we asked teachers what the state should focus on first to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of students with disabilities, general and special education teachers alike described a need for increased familiarity with effective ways to teach students with disabilities. Respondents acknowledged that providing techniques for meeting the diverse needs of students across varied disabilities will require ongoing professional education, beginning during the preservice college coursework. Both general and special education teachers identified a need for general education teachers to learn about providing interventions and supports. More specifically, participants indicated that most general education teachers feel under-prepared for special education students in their classrooms. Intervention specialists observed that most available professional development they access does not include information, strategies, or practices that specifically address the needs of their students. They also identified the need for increased access to specific techniques that address mental health and behavioral issues, as well as adult learning on co-planning or co-teaching to serve students with disabilities in the general education classroom.
These data demonstrate the significant need for early intervention and special education leaders at the local level who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and competencies to improve systems serving children with disabilities and their families. Ohio will use two sets of competencies to guide the development of the proposed program: (1) Council for Exceptional Children’s Advanced Standards for Special Education Specialists and (2) The National Association for the Education of Young Children’s Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (Level III). Using both sets of competencies is critical because very few professionals will have the knowledge reflected in each; some will have a basic special education background with little knowledge of early childhood while others will have a background in early childhood, but little knowledge related to special education. Ohio will also incorporate the Division of Early Childhood’s Recommended Practices into the project activities as a key set of evidence-based practices for improving outcomes for young children with disabilities. Each set of competencies are included in Appendix B and described on pages 18 - 20 of this application.

**Significance: Current Issues and Policies.** There are many education issues that early intervention and special education professionals need to understand. Among these are the federal law and what it requires, how Ohio has implemented the law within its rules, and how the requirements of the law and rights of the students look in everyday practice. Currently, the Ohio Administrative Code (rules that provide requirements for the implementation of law) is being revised; and after they are adopted by the State Board of Education, all educators in public schools will need technical assistance on the changes. Data from general and special education teachers who
participated in a focus group in 2019 demonstrated that Inclusion, Least Restrictive Environment, Screening, Evaluation and Assessment, and Transition are not well understood or consistently operationalized in practice where they work.

In addition to the regulations, teachers, administrators, and service personnel working in public schools reported numerous issues they need help with in order to improve the educational outcomes and experiences of students with disabilities. For example, only half of service providers agreed that schools provide literacy instruction that meets the individual needs of students with disabilities. When asked what challenges exist to providing quality literacy instruction, the most frequent response was a lack of knowledge about how to differentiate instruction to meet diverse needs. As the basis for all learning, early language and literacy development that is supported throughout the early grades is critical for the academic and social success of each and every child.

The results of the statewide survey also included identified needs in the areas of conducting evaluations to determine eligibility, providing services in the least restrictive environment, disproportionality, recruiting and retaining personnel, using technology, and transitions. These issues come directly from schoolteachers and leaders in both general and special education, providing a glimpse into the challenges of staying informed, current, and resourced in order to provide the services and supports each child needs. Federal initiatives that our educators need to be informed about include the Future Leaders Initiative, the OSEP Educational Technology, Media, and Materials (ETechM2) program, Collaboration spaces, and available technical assistance and training opportunities.
The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, Ohio’s Parent Information and Training Center, oversees a small group of parent mentors, whose work is to provide direct communication, support, and information to any parent whose child is in special education. Within the 73 funded projects, 92 parent mentors provide services to approximately 274 school districts and Boards of Developmental Disabilities across the state. Ohio is comprised of 612 school districts, which means there are a significant number of parents who may not have a reliable source for supports with which to navigate the complexities of education and disability.

**Significance: Infrastructure and Implementation Supports.** To effectively develop, deliver, and sustain a leadership development program to recruit, increase the capacity of, and retain a network of leaders at the local level with the knowledge, skills, and competencies to improve systems serving children with disabilities and their families, Ohio will strengthen the supports already in place. The early childhood leaders across Ohio’s seven child-serving state agencies meet monthly with Governor DeWine’s cabinet level Director of Children’s Initiatives. The purpose of these meetings is to communicate, cooperate, collaborate, and coordinate the work across the diverse mixed-delivery system of early childhood programs and services in Ohio. The activities proposed in this application are fully supported by the state agency leadership, whom will engage as supports and full partners in the communication, planning, and implementation of the program.

In addition to the state agency leaders, Ohio’s Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC), the Governor-appointed stakeholders, has been informed of the proposed application and will receive regular updates on the work. The group meets quarterly to
discuss Ohio’s early childhood system and activities including programming, service
gaps and reach, advocacy, and future planning, activities, and outcomes. Other
stakeholder engagement includes presenting to, and collaborating with, each of the
following groups: Early Intervention Advisory Council, Child Care Advisory Council,
State Panel on Exceptional Children, Ohio Association of Elementary School
Administrators, Ohio Educational Service Centers Association, Buckeye Association of
School Administrators, Ohio Leadership Advisory Council, Ohio Association of County

In addition to ECAC, as described above, the early childhood system is diverse
and fortunate to have so many partnership opportunities. Eighty-eight Family and
Children First Councils (one in each county) oversee the Early Intervention programs
locally and ensure compliance with the requirements of IDEA. The Ohio Head Start
Association provides leadership and connection with the Head Start State Collaboration
office and the 56 federal to local grantees. Twelve regional Child Care Resource and
Referral Agencies employ direct technical assistance providers whose job is to support
childcare providers in licensing and Step Up to Quality standards. The sixteen State
Support Teams, who are a regional network resource to all 612 of Ohio’s school
districts, provide professional development and guidance with needs assessments, data
analytics, and strategies for performance improvement, with a special emphasis on
special education. This group is comprised of early childhood and special education
experts who provide technical assistance and guidance to the education system. Each
one of these partners is ready, willing, and able to engage in the program development,
deployment, and sustainability planning. Each has a vested interest in early childhood
workforce development and leadership, experience and expertise to contribute, and a commitment to prepare the adults who teach our most vulnerable children.

Section 2: Quality of Project Services

Given the landscape of learning and teaching children with disabilities in Ohio, this application proposes a leadership development program that will increase the knowledge, skills, and leadership capacity of early childhood leaders; impact communities serving children with disabilities and their families by identifying and resolving relevant problems of practice; increase the competence and confidence of early childhood leaders to assess and implement evidence-based strategies in the places they work; and increase the competence and confidence of early childhood leaders to lead needed systems improvement in the places they work.

To carry out these goals, Ohio will create and deploy an Early Childhood Inclusive Leadership Fellowship program with forty-four participants across three cohorts in five years. In the following section of this application, we describe how the leadership development opportunity will be advertised as well as how participants will be recruited, selected, and engaged in the two-year fellowship.

Quality of Project Services: Equal Access. Ohio will ensure equal access and treatment for members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability through its planning and recruitment, retention, and supports for the proposed project. We will do this by engaging our identified stakeholders from the beginning of planning in our Project Advisory Team and throughout the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the project.
Quality of Project Services: Goals, Objectives and Intended Outcomes. With the data above demonstrating the need and desire from early childhood professionals across Ohio’s birth – grade three system, we propose the following goals, objectives and intended outcomes for the project. Ohio has one goal for the project, which is to enhance the skills, knowledge, and leadership capacity of early childhood leaders so that they can impact the development and education of children with disabilities and their families in meaningful and intentionally positive ways. In order to do this, we have three inter-related objectives for the project period:

1. Create an effective and efficient model of personalized learning that will consist of face-to-face and online training, use of the internet and other technologies designed to create and sustain an effective network of support for early childhood leaders, implementation of coaching and mentoring to provide ongoing support, and implementation of job-embedded activities and assignments designed so that project participants can apply what they are learning to their work with peers, colleagues, and families;

2. Recruit and retain participants from high-need school districts and feeder Early Intervention programs who will complete a two-year professional learning and mentoring experience that will culminate in the identification and resolution of a relevant problem of practice to improve services to young children with disabilities and their families; and

3. Align existing competencies for knowledge, skills, and leadership across Ohio’s state agencies, early childhood and school professional development providers, Institutes of Higher Education, and professional organizations to identify and implement
a cohesive, comprehensive, and coordinated set of standards for professionals working with children with disabilities and their families in their formative years.

By completing activities as outlined in this application, Ohio expects to achieve at least four short-term outcomes by the end of the project. These short-term outcomes include: (1) Increase the knowledge, skills, and leadership capacity of early childhood leaders; (2) Impact communities serving children with disabilities and their families by identifying and resolving relevant problems of practice; (3) Increase the competence and confidence of early childhood leaders to assess and implement evidence-based strategies in the places they work; and (4) Increase the competence and confidence of early childhood leaders to lead needed systems improvement in the places they work.

In the long-term, this project will continue to contribute to the above short-term goals, at least through the end of Year five project period. In addition, Ohio will create, test and disseminate an aligned set of competencies for the knowledge, skills, and leadership capacity for working with young children with disabilities and their families so that professionals outside of the participating communities can benefit from the project. Ultimately, by keeping our focus on the project’s objectives, activities, and outcomes, we will move beyond project participants and enhance the skills, knowledge, and leadership capacity of each early childhood leader so that they can impact the development and education of children with disabilities and their families in meaningful and intentionally positive ways. The way Ohio will measure each of these goals, objectives, and outcomes is outlined in detail in Section 3 (Quality of Project Evaluation) and Appendix A (Logic Model and Conceptual Framework) of this proposal.

**Quality of Project Services: Leadership development program.** Ohio proposes to
develop an Early Childhood Inclusive Leadership Fellowship program for administrators whose programs serve children between birth through grade three. The fellowship will increase the capacity of current administrators and promote retention through increased understanding of how to support the academic and social needs of students with disabilities. The fellowship will also serve as a pathway for recruiting administrators to advance from local to regional or state levels who have the necessary knowledge and skills to improve Ohio’s systems for serving children with disabilities and their families.

**Quality of Project Services: Partners.** We have identified several key partners to collaborate on the development, delivery, and evaluation of the Early Childhood Inclusive Leadership Fellowship. The University of Toledo will serve as our primary Higher Education partner providing expertise on early childhood special education leadership competencies, distance delivery for adult learners, and program evaluation. In addition, we will engage the members of the Ohio Deans Compact on Exceptional Children, an organization consisting of higher education deans from around the state whose work to improve educator preparation programs, including education administration programs, to produce educators who can effectively teach and support every child. The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (Ohio’s Parent, Training, and Information Center) will ensure that essential competencies for working with families of children with disabilities are included in the professional learning component of the fellowship and will facilitate the recruitment of parents of young children with disabilities to serve as collaborators on this project. The Ohio Leadership Advisory Council will facilitate the inclusion of their professional development modules for school administrators into the fellowship’s professional learning offerings. In
addition, a number of stakeholder groups including the Ohio Educational Services Center Association, Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators, and the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities will contribute by recruiting fellows, recruiting and/or serving as mentors, and reviewing content and program design, development, and evaluation.

Quality of Project Services: Participants. The intended participants of the Early Childhood Inclusive Leadership Fellowship will be individuals currently employed as community or school leaders whose programs serve children receiving Early Intervention services, Preschool Special Education services, and/or special education services in the early elementary grades. In Ohio, IDEA Part C services are administered through the Department of Developmental Disabilities while IDEA Part B services are administered through the Department of Education. Many of Ohio’s school districts do not operate their own preschool programs to serve their three to five-year old children with disabilities, opting instead to contract with Educational Service Centers, County Boards of Developmental Disabilities, or community programs. The fragmentation of program operators at the infant-toddler, preschool, and school age levels adds complexity and challenges to the transitions of our youngest children with disabilities and their families.

We have identified eleven school districts to prioritize during the grant period in three separate cohorts. These eleven were selected because they need targeted supports to improve their systems of special education, based on their IDEA Indicator data. The cohort model will allow us to start small, set up a system for continuous improvement from one cohort to the next, and facilitate sustaining the fellowship after
the grant ends. We will recruit administrators from the identified districts and their corresponding county Early Intervention system (including, but not limited to, elementary school principals, district special education directors/coordinators, preschool/childcare administrators, and county board of developmental disabilities administrators).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Targeted Districts</th>
<th>Counties</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 1</td>
<td>Canton, Cleveland &amp; East Cleveland</td>
<td>Cuyahoga, Stark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2021-June 2023</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 2</td>
<td>Cincinnati, Youngstown, Toledo &amp; Lima</td>
<td>Hamilton, Mahoning, Lucas, Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2022-June 2024</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 3</td>
<td>Columbus, Akron, Dayton &amp; Zanesville</td>
<td>Franklin, Summit, Montgomery, Muskingum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2023-June 2025</td>
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</table>

We will prioritize participation from across the ages/grade levels served within each cohort to provide opportunities for participants to have cross system discussions and experiences during the fellowship. Recognizing that services for children with disabilities may be provided in community settings outside of traditional school districts, participation in the fellowship is open to administrators of any program type that provide care and education, and/or related services to young children with disabilities within the target district service area including the surrounding county.

**Quality of Project Services: Knowledge, skills and competencies.** For the purposes of this project, we will use two sets of competencies to guide the development of all learning activities, and one set of recommended practices: (1) Council for Exceptional Children’s (CEC) Advanced Standards for Special Education Specialists, (2) The National Association for the Education of Young Children’s (NAEYC) Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators (Level III), and (3) Division
of Early Childhood’s (DEC) Recommended Practices. Although the DEC’s Recommended Practices do not represent competencies, they are important to address in this professional development project for school-based leaders. Readers who are unfamiliar with NAEYC’s Professional Standards and Competencies should understand that NAEYC has undertaken a “leveling” approach in terms of the standards and competencies. Level III is the highest level and reflects preparation for leadership in early childhood programs. Each of the competencies and the recommended practices are included in Appendix B and summarized below.

**CEC’s Advanced Standards for Special Education Specialists**

This set of standards focuses on the knowledge and skills that individuals who work as special education specialists must have in order to promote effective learning and outcomes for children with disabilities. We assume that participants chosen for this project will already possess appropriate teacher or practitioner credentials aligned with their leadership position and will have basic knowledge and skills related to special education. However, in their roles as program leaders, they also need competencies that allow them to make informed decisions about program or school policy and practice as they relate to children with disabilities and their families. These standards are comprised of six key areas: (a) assessment, (b) curricular content knowledge, (c) programs, services, and outcomes, (d) research and inquiry, (e) leadership and policy, and (f) professional and ethical practice.

**NAEYC’s Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators**

These standards and competencies represent what early childhood leaders must know and be able to do to support successful learning for each child. Newly-minted,
they address six key areas: (a) child development and learning in context, (b) family-teacher partnerships and community connections, (c) child observation, documentation, and assessment, (d) developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate teaching practices, (e) knowledge, application, and integration of academic content in the early childhood curriculum, and (f) professionalism as an early childhood educator. These competencies were intentionally chosen because we know that many school leaders lack a solid understanding of what high-quality early care and learning programs look like (Lieberman & Bornfreund, 2019). Using these standards as a foundation for the development of learning activities will help them gain this knowledge so they can provide better leadership related to early learning programs for young children with disabilities and their families.

**DEC’s Recommended Practices (RPs)**

Finally, we are including DEC’s RPs as a document that will serve as a foundation for learning activities (DEC, 2014). The Recommended Practices represent a set of evidence-based practices that every early childhood educator must be aware of—not just educators that work with children with disabilities. They were developed through a comprehensive process of literature review and careful vetting and represent the field’s wisdom in providing effective services to young children (from birth to six years) and their families. There are eight sets of practices that focus on the following: (a) assessment, (b) environment, (c) family, (d) instruction, (e) interaction, (f) leadership, (g) teaming and collaboration, and (h) transition.

The competencies described above address the six required content elements. The table below shows the alignment between our selected national standards,
competencies and recommended practices that will be used to develop the professional
teaching and the required core knowledge, skills, and competencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Side by Side of Required Elements and Selected Competencies</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Required core knowledge, skills, and competencies</strong></td>
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| (1) Federal laws, State laws, and State policies, procedures, and initiatives that impact children with disabilities and their families | CEC Programs, Services, and Outcomes (Standard 3)  
CEC Leadership and Policy (Standard 5)  
CEC Professionalism and Ethical Practice (Standard 6)  
DEC’s RPs on Leadership |
| (2) Educational options for children with disabilities and how to support State’s efforts to empower parents to choose from a robust range of educational options and supports to identify those that best meet their children’s needs | CEC Curriculum (Standard 2)  
CEC Programs, Services, and Outcomes (Standard 3)  
CEC Leadership and Policy (Standard 5)  
NAEYC Child Development (Standard 1)  
NAEYC Family-Teacher Partnerships and Community Connections (Standard 2)  
DEC's RPs on Leadership  
DEC’s RPs on Environment  
DEC’s RPs on Families  
DEC’s RPs on Teaming and Collaboration |
| (3) Evidence-based practices to improve academic, learning, and developmental outcomes for children with disabilities, including differentiating interventions and instruction across multi-tiered systems of support | CEC Curriculum (Standard 2);  
CEC Programs, Services, and Outcomes (Standard 3)  
CEC Research and Inquiry (Standard 4)  
NAEYC Child Development (Standard 1)  
NAEYC Assessment (Standard 3)  
NAEYC Developmentally, Culturally, and Linguistically Appropriate Teaching Practices (Standard 4)  
NAEYC Knowledge, Application, and Integration of Academic Content in the Early Childhood Curriculum (Standard 5)  
DEC’s RPs on Assessment  
DEC’s RPs on Environment  
DEC’s RPs on Families  
DEC’s RPs on Instruction  
DEC’s RPs on Interaction  
DEC’s RPs on Teaming and Collaboration |
| (4) Partnering with parents, families, and diverse stakeholders to improve systems | CEC Collaboration (Standard 7)  
NAEYC Child Development (Standard 1)  
NAEYC Family-Teacher Partnerships and Community Connections (Standard 2) |
Quality of Project Services: Evidence-based practices. The content and delivery of the proposed Early Childhood Inclusive Leadership Fellowship will be developed on the evidence-based principles of professional learning. Professional learning is a new term that is used in place of the term “professional development” or “training”. In education, the term professional learning emphasizes the importance of educators who are engaged in continual learning in order to improve their effectiveness. High-quality professional learning experiences share a set of characteristics that are reflected in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 (Mathis & Trujillo, 2016). These standards are based on what science tells us about how adults learn (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000) and emphasize the importance of professional activities that are sustained (not stand-alone, one-day, or short term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused (Learning Forward, n.d.).

The proposed Fellowship provides two years of learning so that participants have sustained opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills and have opportunities to practice those skills while receiving support and performance feedback from their mentors. Adults learn best when opportunities for learning are spaced across time
(Donavan, Bransford, & Pelligrino, 1999). This means that traditional “one shot” in-service trainings do little to promote learning, understanding, and most important of all, the opportunity to apply learning to practice (Snyder, Hemmeter, & McLaughlin, 2011). Educators need time to learn about key concepts and skills and they also need time to learn how to apply these key concepts and skills in their everyday work.

Learning not only takes time, depending on the targeted knowledge or skill, it can be an intensive process that begins with acquisition and ends with generalization (Haring et al., 1978). A learner who is just beginning to acquire a skill will need support in order to perform the skill accurately and dependably. Learners at this stage need help and support from others; support can include modeling, demonstration, and the provision of performance feedback (Cepeda, et al., 2006). Once the learner has acquired a skill, she or he needs multiple opportunities to practice and receive feedback to improve fluency. Once the learner reaches a desired level of fluency, the learning goal turns to maintenance—a stage that focuses on helping the learner maintain the accurate and appropriate use of the skill without support. Generalization is the final stage of the learning process and occurs when the learner can use a particular skill in settings that differ from the original learning context.

The program proposed in this application is conceptualized as a collaborative experience with peers, mentors, and experts. Vygotsky (Berk & Winsler, 1995) emphasized that learning is a social process that is strengthened when learners have opportunities to engage with information and knowledge as well as others, including more competent learners. Just as children learn more efficiently when they have access to more competent peers and adults who support them, so do adults. As a social
process, learning involves interactions with others who can provide support and scaffold progress towards the maintenance and generalization of a skill. The most effective kind of adult support is collaborative in nature and includes individuals who respect and acknowledge the expertise of learners. Developing a collaborative relationship takes time and involves evolving mutual respect as well as a comfort level that allows learners to take risks and accept feedback from others.

Principles of adult learning (Bransford et al., 2000) suggest that adults appreciate learning opportunities that occur within the context of a specific setting. Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that effective and efficient learning is situated within an authentic learning site. The importance of situated learning is consistent with the principles of job-embedded professional development (JEPD). JEPD refers to learning that is grounded in one’s daily practices (Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010). Providing professional development experiences that are tied to one’s professional practice increases the likelihood that the learner will apply new knowledge and skills to his or her job—a primary goal of the field of education (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009).

Teaching and learning involves a decision-making process that is based on evidence. Early childhood professionals need information about children and their learning environments in order to make sound decisions about how to best support them. By the same token, educators engaged in collaborative professional learning processes need data and information in order to identify sound goals for professional learning as well as develop solid strategies to promote adult learning.

**Quality of Project Services: Sufficient quality, intensity and duration of program.**
Ohio’s Early Childhood Inclusive Leadership Fellowship program will be designed to be flexible to meet the needs of individual participants. Fellows are likely to represent a variety of positions which require different skill sets (e.g., building level administrator, district level administrator, community-based program administrator). To address these differences, participants will complete a self-assessment to identify their priority focus areas related to the competencies and skills described in the previous section to determine individual learning needs. Through the work of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform Center (CEEDAR), state education agencies have guidance about how Inclusive Principal Leadership practice can permeate preparation, induction, and mentoring throughout the continuum of an administrator’s career. In support of effective principal practice, recently revised Ohio Standards for Principals emphasize that the principal is highly impactful and critical to the success of the learning environment and serves as instructional leader, community builder and student and educator advocate. This guidance will anchor the content of the fellowship and ensure research-based design and key leadership practices.

During the first year of the Fellowship, participants will choose from a menu of online interactive and self-tutorial professional learning options based on the needs identified in their pre-assessments in addition to a core set of modules. Mid-way through the first year, each participant will identify a problem of practice that they will use as the focus on their culminating project. Through two in-person and six virtual meetings that first year, Fellows will engage in discussion activities and present on the progress and challenges of their problem of practice projects. As each Fellow moves from the
exploration phase to the installation phase with his/her project, we will identify an appropriate mentor to support the Fellow in his/her second year of the project.

In the second year of Ohio’s Early Childhood Inclusive Leadership Fellowship, participants will shift from a learning experience to a mentoring experience. The learning they have completed over the past year will inform the specialized, targeted best practice strategies they will now learn to put into sustainable practice. The goal of the second program year is to embed inclusive leadership practices throughout the role the Fellow occupies, so it doesn’t become something separate and distinct, but rather a thematic lens through which the role is done, emphasizing equity and a culture of high expectations for all children.

**Quality of Project Services: Participant recruitment.** Participants will be recruited from the eleven identified districts and child-serving organizations within the counties where the districts are located. Communications will be widely distributed through the Ohio Department of Education and Developmental Disabilities websites, as well as through respective professional membership groups such as the Ohio Educational Service Centers Association, Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators, and the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities.

For each of three cohorts, potential candidates must be employed as an administrator of a program that serves children receiving Early Intervention services, Preschool Special Education services, and/or special education services in grades kindergarten through three; and the program must be in one of the target districts or counties. We will prioritize selection of candidates to ensure representation at the district/county level from (1) each of the age groups (i.e., infant/toddler, preschool, K-3);
(2) different sectors (e.g., public districts, community partners); (3) different levels of administration (e.g., building/program site administrators, district-level/off-site administrators). If additional selection criteria are necessary to rank applicants, we will look at range of years of experience in administration (i.e., 1-2, 3-5, 6-10, more than 10). We will accept up to 12 candidates in the first cohort, and up to 16 candidates in each subsequent cohorts, with a goal of 2-4 participants from each district/county.

**Quality of Project Services: Strategies for supporting and retaining participants.**

Strategies for supporting and retaining participants to complete the program and apply the knowledge, skills, and competencies used to improve systems serving young children with disabilities are built into the structure of the Ohio Early Childhood Inclusion Leadership Fellowship program. The characteristics of high-quality professional learning, as described in the previous section, contribute to participant engagement which is essential to support participants’ persistence through program completion. The job-embedded professional learning and the individual projects will provide Fellows with scaffolded practice applying the knowledge, skills, and competencies gained by this experience into their everyday work.

Mentor selection and training, including clearly defining the role of the mentor, are also key to retaining participants (Castanheira, 2016). We will take great care to ensure we have a good mentor match for each fellow and will provide mentors with the necessary training to be successful. We will provide opportunities and structure to support mentors and Fellows in developing positive, trusting relationships.

**Quality of Project Services: Strategies to sustain the program.** Ohio will sustain the project through our ongoing commitment to bringing in new cohorts annually, monitoring
the impact of our efforts, and updating the content and delivery of the program as indicated by the data and new learning from research. Ohio will maintain a small core Project Management Team, led by two individuals from the Ohio Department of Education and one from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities after the grant period ends. Similarly, after the grant period closes, in lieu of continuing with the Project Advisory Board for this specific project, the Project Management Team will regularly report to, and seek counsel from, three standing councils: Ohio's Early Childhood Advisory Council, Ohio's State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children, and Ohio's Early Intervention Advisory Council.

Funding for continuation of this work will be supported directly through IDEA Part B Section 611 discretionary funds for the ongoing costs of infrastructure and in person meeting costs. Additionally, the post-grant Project Management Team members' time and effort will continue to be paid for out of existing funding streams which include IDEA and state general revenue funds.

**Quality of Project Services: Technology.** The Early Childhood Inclusive Leadership Fellowship will utilize technology as a resource to engage participants. We will identify an online platform that will allow for, at a minimum, sharing content, whole group and small group discussion forums, and web conferencing. To minimize required travel for participants, virtual meetings will occur six times per year for each cohort. Additionally, we will use discussion forums as part of the curriculum, as well as a community of practice dashboard space where Fellows can discuss and contribute to each other's problems of practice resolutions. Mentors and Fellows will be encouraged to use technology to convene for virtual coaching including performance feedback and sharing
Technology will be used to enhance efficiency of the project and to collaborate with project partners. Web conferencing will be used whenever possible, in lieu of in person meetings, with the Project Management Team and the Project Advisory Board to minimize travel expense and travel time. The Project Management Team will set up a shared virtual workspace to share documents, including content, communications, and processes, timelines, and calendars.

Section 3: Quality of the Project Evaluation

The purpose of any evaluation is two-fold—first, to provide ongoing data that project staff can use to determine if the project is on course and meeting its goals and objectives and, second, to provide data that local, regional, and state leaders stakeholders can use to determine the impact of the project on the quality of learning experience opportunities for children with disabilities and their families.

The evaluation plan described here is thorough, feasible and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project. It is designed to collect both formative and summative data on the implementation and impact of each major component of the project. Guskey (2000) presents a model of program evaluation specifically designed to address the impact of professional development efforts. His model consists of five levels of information useful in determining the impact of a professional development program such as the one being proposed here. The levels are hierarchical in nature, from simple levels of information (i.e., assessing participants’ satisfaction) to complex (i.e., impact of the professional development on changing practices). Guskey’s model extends beyond simple levels of satisfaction with project
activities to examine how the project impacted consumers (i.e., school districts and communities).

Following Guskey’s model, Ohio will collect multiple levels of information ranging from the simple (“Did they like it?”) to the complex (“Did it make a difference?”). In addition to understanding the impact of the project, we are also interested in understanding the “whys” and “how’s” involved in this project. For example, while we will ask straightforward questions such as “Will you use this information in your work with colleagues in your district or community?” we will also ask questions that help us gather more specific information, like “How will you use this information in your work?” and “Provide an example of how you will use this information.” Asking these types of questions will help us understand the underlying mechanisms of the processes that are useful and effective (as well as those that are useless and ineffective). In turn, this information will guide our work and will help others interested in this work as we disseminate information about the project.

**Quality of Project Evaluation: Collect, Analyze, and Use Data.** The table below provides an overview of the evaluation plan and shows how evaluation activities are linked to the goal of the project. Information will be collected across each level and major project activity. Evaluation tools consist of electronic questionnaires, focus groups, and individual interviews conducted with participants and their colleagues/supervisors.
The goal of the project is to enhance the skills, knowledge, and leadership capacity of early childhood leaders so that they can impact the development and education of children with disabilities and their families in meaningful and intentionally positive ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Evaluation</th>
<th>Type of Data</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ reactions or satisfaction with the project</td>
<td>Electronic questionnaires focused on all learning activities</td>
<td>Years 2-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory Board members’ reactions or satisfaction with the project, as well as their suggestions for improvement</td>
<td>Electronic questionnaires focused on the degree to which the project is being successfully managed</td>
<td>Years 1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ learning</td>
<td>Pre/post assessments of participants’ knowledge Analyses of portfolio assessment and action research project</td>
<td>Years 2-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of participants’ learning on the organization</td>
<td>Analyses of portfolio assessment and action research project</td>
<td>Years 3-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ use of new knowledge or information</td>
<td>Interviews with randomly-selected participants, their constituents, and their OECLP mentors focused on the differential levels of evaluation (i.e., How are they using the information? What is the impact on their work with educators/providers? What is the impact of their involvement in the project on CWD and their families?)</td>
<td>Years 2-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quality of Project Evaluation: Formative measures.** Ohio will build multiple formative measures including from multiple sources including needs assessment surveys, annotated outlines, teaching and learning strategies, individual input and feedback; as well as rubrics, self-report inventories, and coaching logs. These measures will provide the Project Management Team with both qualitative and quantitative data on which to base improvement decisions for the program’s content, delivery, and activities.
Results from needs assessment surveys of potential participants (i.e., school-based and leaders in school and in county boards of developmental disabilities leaders) will help target gaps in knowledge and practice. The Project Management Team will create these surveys at the beginning of the curriculum development process to inform the scope and sequence of the curriculum. We will use the results of the needs assessment surveys to develop annotated outlines of the training modules that will reflect the scope and sequence of the curriculum, which we will then share with members of the Project Advisory Board for input and feedback.

We will then create outlines of the teaching/learning strategies (based on principles of adult learning) that will be used in the professional learning experience, which will also go before the Project Advisory Board for input and subsequent refinements. Once each learning module is developed, we will pilot-test them with small groups of individuals who will represent targeted stakeholders. Finally, we will solicit feedback from members of the Project Advisory Board about our progress through electronic surveys that protect the identity of the members so they can share their authentic reactions. In addition to asking about their satisfaction, we will also use the electronic survey to gather information about what we should be doing to achieve our goals and objectives.

**Quality of Project Evaluation: Using Results of Evaluation.** Ohio will use the information gathered throughout the Early Childhood Inclusive Leadership Fellowship to monitor performance of the program components, including the professional learning and mentoring experiences. We will collect and analyze information that will inform necessary changes to content, delivery, activities and processes. Beginning almost
immediately, the Project Management Team will collect information from key partners who have committed to helping us develop materials. As the project is formed and developed, we will regularly report progress and results to the three state advisory groups previously mentioned. Annually, Ohio will report project performance to OSEP and make that annual report available on its website.

Section 4: Adequacy of Resources and Quality of Project Personnel

A Project Management Team, Project Advisory Board, and the Early Childhood Advisory Council, which are described in Section 5 below, will support the activities proposed in this application. The Project Management Team will encourage applications for contractors from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, as appropriate. We will also ensure that our Project Advisory Board is comprised of individuals who have been traditionally underrepresented.

Adequacy of Resources: Qualifications and Experience. The two project teams are well equipped to complete the activities proposed in this application. Those persons identified in the Project Management Team have experience in Early Intervention at the county and state levels working with children and their families, service providers, intervention specialists, and service coordinators. The Project Director, Dr. Wendy Grove, has been leading early childhood programs for Ohio since 2009, including both Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education. Before that, she oversaw professional development for Early Intervention, Newborn Hearing Screening, and Home Visiting. With a Doctoral education in sociological systems, Dr. Grove has both the education and experience to oversee the proposed project.
The project co-leads come with extensive expertise and experience in Birth – age three and age three to grade three, respectively. Nathan DeDino has been Ohio’s Part C Coordinator for the past five years, a role he filled after several years conducting data analysis and reporting in Early Intervention. Mr. DeDino brings extensive knowledge as well as important partnerships to this work, as his program administration includes all eighty-eight county boards of developmental disabilities, Ohio’s foremost contributor to Early Intervention service provision. Sophia Hubbell is a licensed special educator who brings extensive knowledge and experience across early childhood education, assessment, special education policy and practice, and teacher licensure. Ms. Hubbell has worked extensively on personnel preparation both as a graduate student and more recently, as a member of the Ohio Department of Education early learning and school readiness team. Additional team members are identified in Table 5 (Section 4) of this application, with resumes provided in Attachment 5.

In addition to these the Project leadership, Ohio has engaged four organizational partners in the planning of this application who have adequate resources to complete the project, as well as extensive experience in creating high-quality products. The University of Toledo is our Institute of Higher Education partner, well equipped to contribute to the content creation and delivery of the proposed project. Product and service examples from the other organization partners are available at their websites, including the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council, the Ohio Center on Autism and Low Incidence, and the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, Ohio’s Parent Information and Training Center.
A Project Advisory Board has been identified as persons with significant knowledge and experience in areas of development or with young children with disabilities and their families. As outlined in Table 6 in Section 5 below, each person the Project Advisory Board brings with them particular expertise that will allow Ohio to develop and deploy a program to increase the leadership competencies of current professionals in early childhood.

**Adequacy of Resources: Capacity.** The Ohio Department of Education is well situated to lead a project of this size, duration, and type. As the state’s lead for over 1.6 million children in school and over 134,000 educators, the Department has successfully implemented billions of dollars in federal grants and is committed to ensuring the project is delivered on budget and in full compliance with state and federal fiscal and accounting laws and regulations. The Office of Fiscal Services and Office of Grants Management both oversee standard protocols to ensure that grant funds are expended and accounted for in full compliance with federal regulations and consistent with grant requirements. Staff from these offices are integral parts of the project team and continuously involved in grant administration. In addition to the Lead Agency, we will complete the work with four significant partners, whose organizations are uniquely suited to contribute to the capacity and quality of the proposed project.

*The University of Toledo (UToledo)* is a public metropolitan university serving approximately 20,000 undergraduate and graduate students. It houses nine colleges, including the Judith Herb College of Education (JHCOE). The JHCOE is comprehensive in nature, offering bachelors, masters, education specialists, and doctoral degrees in several different areas, including early childhood education, special
education, and educational administration. It also houses the Herb Innovation Center, an externally funded research and innovation center with a mission to improve the profession of education by supporting innovative and sustainable educational and human science research and by offering students applied research experiences vital to their professional development. UTToledo is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and educational licensure programs have been continually accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and/or the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation.

The Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (OLAC) operates to help districts implement leadership practices that result in improved outcomes for all learners. These leadership practices focus on improving instruction and creating learning environments that are engaging, inclusive and developmentally appropriate. OLAC maintains a professional development website that provides professional development tools and resources for educators. Over 30,000 educators access the modules, webinars, podcasts and other tools available on the site. This figure includes 3,376 principals and 1,403 assistant principals, mostly from Ohio schools. OLAC also routinely provides direct training to principals, central office administrators, regional providers and teachers on a regional basis.

The Ohio Center on Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) is a state supported entity that boasts four Centers. One of these, the Center for the Young Child (CYC) informs policy, creates and shared resources, and provides professional development and technical assistance so that young children (Birth through age 8) with disabilities have the foundation they need for a lifetime of learning, growth, and opportunities in
their community. The CYC grounds its work in the latest brain, policy, and implementation research, and is an active collaborator with local, state, and national organizations and associations. With dedicated staff members, all having over 20 years of experience in early intervention, early childhood education and developmental disabilities, the CYC creates and deploys high quality, state-of-the-art solutions for families and professionals, focusing efforts on initiatives that have consistent and sustainable impact. The professional development resources developed by and offered through OCALI and the CYC, in partnership with Ohio’s state agencies, have been used by more than one hundred thousand professionals. With its whole child perspective, cross-agency partnerships, and innovative thinking, the CYC is poised and ready to collaborate with project partners to build Ohio’s early childhood leadership and improve the educational outcomes and inclusive experiences for Ohio’s youngest children.

With an advanced technology infrastructure, OCALI has the capability to create and maintain a vast array of high-tech resources, including websites and multimedia products that support information sharing and adult learning. OCALI hosts over 40 websites focused across lifespan issues. It hosts 10 online professional development learning systems. OCALI’s Integrated Systems Team provides expertise in information technology across multiple venues for innovation and design of informational materials. OCALI has experience in developing and disseminating accessible, high-quality information in multiple languages via webcasts, podcasts, online modules, and print media.

*The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD)*, has served for more than 30 years as the federally funded Parent Training and Information
Center (PTI) in Ohio. The OCECD is unique not only in its work, but also in its ability to connect relevant stakeholders together, working with over 40 parent and professional disability organizations and over 70 individual members which comprise the Coalition. Through strong partnerships, the Coalition works to advance the educational opportunities for children with disabilities and their families.

OCECD aligns its approach with research that recognizes the value of individualized mentoring (one-on-one) and training for parents who may lack resources and education, or whom experience isolation. The team provides support, education and mentoring to parents of children with disabilities, and knowledge about laws, resources, rights and responsibilities to ensure families are better able to work with agencies so that appropriate services are received for the benefit of their children.

**Adequacy of Resources: Reasonable Costs.** The proposed costs are reasonable for the creation of high-quality products and the benefits expected to the participating Fellows. Many commercially available leadership programs are expensive to produce and participate in, but because Ohio is proposing the project with partners who already create products for adult learning, we will be able to offer the program to participants at no cost. Both the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities will be supporting the activities with in-kind contributions of personnel time who will provide the management experience and content expertise needed for the project to be successful.

**Section 5: Quality of the Management Plan**

**Management Plan: Clearly Defined Responsibilities.** In order to ensure that the project’s intended outcomes will be achieved on time and within budget, Ohio has
identified a Project Management Team, a Project Advisory Board, and utilization of the Early Childhood Advisory Council. The Ohio Department of Education (ODE), in coordination with the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), will administer this grant.

The Project Management Team will function to administer grant funds and activities, including the development, deployment, implementation, evaluation, and reporting of the proposed project. The Project Director, allocated at 15% of her time, will provide oversight of the grant in its entirety, including activities, timelines, and reporting to stakeholders and the US Department of Education funders. The ODE oversees all special education for children aged 3 – 21 and DODD oversees Early Intervention in Ohio. Two Project Leads, allocated at 10% and 20% of their respective time, will oversee the project implementation by age/administrating agency group (Birth – age three and Age three – grade three). A team of six across the two coordinating agencies will have key responsibilities for program development and deployment, defined here as completing activities related to recruitment and communication, stakeholder engagement for program development, and planning for each of the three cohorts. There are two ODE employees who will lead the fiscal and evaluation components of the grant activities, respectively. Finally, the Project Management Team includes organization partners with expertise in early childhood, leadership, parent engagement, and teaching and leading students with disabilities who will create and deliver the content for the proposed learning and mentoring experiences.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Grant Role/Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wendy Grove, PhD</td>
<td>ODE</td>
<td>Director, Office of Early Learning &amp; School Readiness</td>
<td>Project Director Oversight &amp; Reporting Lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan DeDino</td>
<td>DODD</td>
<td>Part C Coordinator Division on Policy and Strategic Planning</td>
<td>Project Lead: Birth – Age 3 Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia Hubbell</td>
<td>ODE</td>
<td>Assistant Director, Curriculum &amp; Assessment, Office of Early Learning &amp; School Readiness</td>
<td>Project Lead: Age 3 – Grade 3 Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane Fox</td>
<td>DODD</td>
<td>EI Program Manager Division on Policy and Strategic Planning</td>
<td>Project Development &amp; Deployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany Madden, MA</td>
<td>DODD</td>
<td>Early Intervention Program Consultant-CSPD Division on Policy and Strategic Planning</td>
<td>Project Development &amp; Deployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jody Beall, MSW</td>
<td>ODE</td>
<td>Assistant Director &amp; IDEA 619 Coordinator, Office of Early Learning &amp; School Readiness</td>
<td>Project Development &amp; Deployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo Hannah Ward, M. Ed., LPCC</td>
<td>ODE</td>
<td>Director, Office for Exceptional Children (Part B of IDEA)</td>
<td>Project Development &amp; Deployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Herrmann, PhD, pHCLE</td>
<td>ODE</td>
<td>Certified Professional Human Capital Leader in Education, Education Program Specialist Office of Educator Effectiveness</td>
<td>Project Development &amp; Deployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Buoni, MEd</td>
<td>ODE</td>
<td>Education Program Specialist, Low Incidence Disabilities</td>
<td>Project Development &amp; Deployment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eben Dowell</td>
<td>ODE</td>
<td>Senior Research Analyst Office of Research, Evaluation &amp; Advanced Analytics</td>
<td>Evaluation Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Haller</td>
<td>ODE</td>
<td>Financial Program Manager, Fiscal Services Office</td>
<td>Budget Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laurie Dinnebeil, PhD</td>
<td>UT</td>
<td>Distinguished University Professor and Daso Herb Chair, University of Toledo</td>
<td>Content Creation &amp; Delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Gay, PhD and Karel Oxley, PhD</td>
<td>BASA</td>
<td>Project Co-Directors, Ohio Leadership Advisory Council,</td>
<td>Content Creation &amp; Delivery</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
As required by this grant, the Project Director, Project Leads, and Project staff and contractors, as needed, will actively participate in the cross-project collaboration and learning opportunities organized by OSEP.

The second team in Ohio’s management plan is the Project Advisory Board, who will be assembled to provide advice and input on the development, deployment, implementation, evaluation, and reporting activities of the proposed project to ensure that the project’s products and services are of high quality, relevant, and useful to recipients. Among this group of invited experts includes those who have worked with infants, toddlers, preschool children with disabilities and their families across the areas of health; mental and social-emotional health; language and literacy; general knowledge; and teaching, leading, and learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Advisory Board Member</th>
<th>Affiliation and Area of Expertise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie Hubbard-Nicosia</td>
<td>Children’s Health Policy Administrator, Ohio Department of Medicaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Bode, MD</td>
<td>Physician, Nationwide Children’s Hospital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyane Gogan Turner</td>
<td>Bureau Chief, Maternal &amp; Child Health</td>
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<tr>
<th>Table 5. Project Advisory Board Members Affiliation and Area of Expertise</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose:</strong> Provide advice and input on the development, deployment, implementation, evaluation, and reporting of the proposed project to ensure that the project’s products and services are of high quality, relevant, and useful to recipients.</td>
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<td>Bonnie Hubbard-Nicosia</td>
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<td>Maternal &amp; Child Health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Valerie Alloy, PhD  Early Childhood Administrator, Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services  Early Childhood Mental Health, Trauma

Bradley Paramo, PhD  Ohio School Psychologists Association President  Children’s Psychology; Social & Emotional Health

Julie Davis  Executive Director, Ohio Association of Elementary School Administrators  Teaching, Leading & Learning

Jennifer Ottley, PhD  Early Intervention Advisory Council member; Ohio University faculty  Teaching, Leading & Learning

Amy McGuffey, PhD  Assistant Professor; Education Early, Elementary & Social Studies, Wittenburg University  Teaching, Leading & Learning

Lisa Hickman, PhD  Executive Director, Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (Ohio Parent Training & Information Center)  Children with disabilities; Parent engagement

Susan Jones  TA Consultant, Project TREES Coordinator, Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities  Children with disabilities Parent engagement

Kristen Hildebrandt  Senior Legal Associate, Disability Rights Ohio  Children with Disabilities

Julie Stone  Associate Director Ohio Head Start Association, Inc.  Children with Disabilities; Parent engagement

Kristie Pretti-Frontczak  Educational Consultant, B2K Solution  Early Childhood Development; Assessment

Lisa Garofalo  Retired, Director of Cincinnati Public Schools Early Childhood Education  Parent engagement; Early Intervention

**Stakeholder Involvement & Reporting.** For the project to achieve the maximum benefit from a diverse group of perspectives, Ohio will utilize the Early Intervention Advisory Council, State Panel on Exceptional Children, and the Early Childhood Advisory Council for input, review, and reporting. These councils include families of children with disabilities, individuals with disabilities, Early Intervention service providers, educators, higher education faculty, technical assistance and professional development providers, researchers, early childhood advocates, early childhood...
association representatives, and policymakers. In addition to this, Ohio will post annual progress toward meeting project goals on its Department website.

Management Plan: Timelines and Milestones. To accomplish the overall goal of the project, which is to enhance the skills, knowledge, and leadership capacity of early childhood leaders so that they can impact the development and education of children with disabilities and their families in meaningful and intentionally positive ways, we have identified four key activities. These activities are outlined by the tasks of communication, development, implementation, evaluation, and reporting. The table below provides the milestones by grant award years 1 - 5 for each of the tasks, activities, and objectives for the proposed project. Year 1 of the grant is anticipated to be from grant award date through June 30, 2021; Year 2 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022); Year 3 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023); Year 4 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024); and Year 5 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective 1: Create an effective and efficient model of personalized learning that will consist of face-to-face and online training, use of the internet and other technologies designed to create and sustain an effective network of support for early childhood leaders, implementation of coaching and mentoring to provide ongoing support, and implementation of job-embedded activities and assignments designed so that project participants can apply what they are learning to their work with peers, colleagues, and families.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity 1: Professional Learning Experience (PLE)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Communicate | Engage the Project Advisory Board (Year 1)  
Contract with Organizational Partners (Year 1)  
Complete initial presentations with EIA, SAPEC, & ECAC (Year 1) |
| Develop | Work with Organizational Partners to create content (Year 1)  
Take drafted content to Project Advisory Board for input (Year 1)  
Revise content based on input (Year 1)  
Pilot test drafted content (Year 1)  
Finalize PLE content across multiple modalities (Year 1)  
Revise PLE content based on evaluation (Years 2 – 4) |
| Implement | Contract for needed technology platform(s) (Year 1)  
Finalize menu of professional learning options (Year 1) |
### Deliver
- Deliver PLE for cohort 1 (Year 2)
- Adjust delivery of PLE, as needed, based on evaluation (Year 2)
- Deliver PLE for cohort 2 (Year 3)
- Adjust delivery of PLE based on evaluation (Year 3)
- Deliver PLE for cohort 3 (Year 4)
- Finalize content of PLE, as needed, based on evaluation (Year 4)

### Evaluate
- Create Needs Assessment surveys (Year 1)
- Create pre-test materials for participants (Year 1)
- Collect data before, during, and after PLE by cohort (Years 2 – 4)
- Analyze data collected from PLE by cohort (Years 2 – 4)

### Report
- Quarterly reports on progress to EIA, SAPEC, & ECAC (Years 1 – 5)
- Annual performance reports to OSEP & post on website (Years 1 – 5)

### Activity 2: Mentoring Experience (ME)

#### Communicate
- Engage the Project Advisory Board (Years 1 - 5)
- Contract with Organizational Partners (Years 1 - 5)

#### Develop
- Work with Organizational Partners to identify roles and responsibilities of mentors and fellows for ME (Year 2)
- Take drafted content to Project Advisory Board for input (Year 2)
- Revise content based on input (Year 2)
- Revise ME content based on evaluation (Years 3 – 5)

#### Implement
- Deliver Mentoring experience to cohort 1 (Year 3)
- Adjust delivery of ME, as needed, based on evaluation (Year 3)
- Deliver Mentoring experience to cohort 2 (Year 4)
- Adjust delivery of ME, as needed, based on evaluation (Year 4)
- Deliver Mentoring experience to cohort 3 (Year 5)
- Finalize content of ME, as needed, based on evaluation (Year 5)

#### Evaluate
- Create pre-test materials for participants (Year 2)
- Collect data before, during, and after ME by cohort (Years 3 – 5)
- Analyze data collected from ME by cohort (Years 3 – 5)
- Revise mentoring experience based on data analysis (Years 3 – 5)

#### Report
- Quarterly reports on progress to EIA, SAPEC, & ECAC (Years 1 – 5)
- Annual performance reports to OSEP (Years 1 – 5)

### Objective 2: Recruit and retain participants from high-need school districts and feeder Early Intervention programs who will complete a two-year learning and mentoring experience that will culminate in the identification and resolution of a relevant problem of practice to improve services to young children with disabilities and their families.

#### Activity 3: Recruit and Retain Participants for Early Childhood Inclusive Leadership Fellowship

#### Communicate
- Engage the Project Advisory Board (Years 1 - 5)
- Engage the Targeted districts and EI programs (Years 1 – 5)

#### Develop
- Create & deploy communications for recruitment (Years 1 – 4)
- Create application forms, process, and scoring rubric (Year 1)
- Take drafted communications to Project Advisory Board for input (Year 1)
- Revise communications based on input (Year 1)
- Revise communications based on evaluation (Years 2 – 4)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective 3: Align the competencies for knowledge, skills, and leadership across Ohio’s state agencies, early childhood and school professional development providers, Institutes of Higher Education, and professional organizations to identify and implement a cohesive, comprehensive, and coordinated set of standards for professionals working with children with disabilities and their families in their formative years.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity 4: Create a set of core competencies for professionals working with children with disabilities and their families in early childhood</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communicate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Develop</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Implement</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluate</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Budget Narrative

**Year 1 (Award Grant date – June 30, 2021).** In Year one of the grant, Ohio is requesting $190,000 across the following categories of expense. In addition to these dollars, Ohio will provide $66,500 in Year 1 of in-kind state dollars (35% match) of under the category of personnel.

**Personnel:** No personnel costs are requested in Year 1 of this budget. 15% of the Project Director and 20% of the Age 3 – Grade 3 Project Lead’s time will be contributed as in-kind.

**Fringe Benefits:** No fringe benefits are requested in Year 1 of this budget.

**Travel:** In order to have three Project Leads attend the two- and one-half day project directors' conference in Washington, DC, we are requesting $3,600.

**Equipment:** No equipment costs are requested in Year 1 of this budget.

**Supplies:** No supply costs are requested in Year 1 of this budget.

**Contractual:** The projected cost for contractors to create the professional learning content in Year 1 across organizational partners is $160,000.

**Construction:** No construction costs are requested in Year 1 of this budget.

**Other:** (1) Website contribution for the hosting of the online learning modules and community of practice, as they are developed in Year 1; and other technologies that will be utilized for the virtual meetings of the Project Management Team and Project Advisory Board in Year 1 are expected to cost $6,400. (2) Design and printing for recruitment materials are expected to cost $10,000 in Year 1. (3) Third-party evaluation supports are expected to cost $10,000 in Year 1 for the development of the measures that will be used throughout Years 2 – 5.
Total Direct Costs: $190,000

Participation Stipends: No participant stipends are requested in Year 1 of this budget.

Total Costs for Year 1: $190,000

Year 2 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022). In Year two of the grant, Ohio is requesting $182,000 across the following categories of expense. In addition to these dollars, Ohio will provide $63,700 in Year 2 of in-kind state dollars (35% match) of under the category of personnel.

Personnel: No personnel costs are requested in Year 2 of this budget. 15% of the Project Director and 20% of the Age 3 – Grade 3 Project Lead’s time will be contributed as in-kind.

Fringe Benefits: No fringe benefits are requested in Year 2 of this budget.

Travel: In order to have three Project Leads attend the two- and one-half day project directors’ conference in Washington, DC, we are requesting $3,600.

Equipment: No equipment costs are requested in Year 2 of this budget.

Supplies: No supply costs are requested in Year 2 of this budget.

Contractual: The projected cost for contractors to deploy the professional learning content with cohort one in Year 2 and create the mentoring experience content across organizational partners is $160,000.

Construction: No construction costs are requested in Year 2 of this budget.

Other: (1) Website contribution for the hosting of the online learning modules and community of practice; and other technologies that will be utilized for the virtual meetings in Year 2 are expected to cost $6,400.
Total Direct Costs: $170,000

*Participation Stipends:* Participant stipends are requested for the twelve participants in cohort one at $1,000 per person to cover substitute costs, time away from work needed, and any in-home technology needed to fully participate ($12,000).

Total Costs for Year 2: $182,000

**Year 3 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023).** In Year three of the grant, Ohio is requesting $198,000 across the following categories of expense. In addition to these dollars, Ohio will provide $69,300 in Year 3 of in-kind state dollars (35% match) of under the category of personnel.

*Personnel:* No personnel costs are requested in Year 3 of this budget. 15% of the Project Director and 20% of the Age 3 – Grade 3 Project Lead’s time will be contributed as in-kind.

*Fringe Benefits:* No fringe benefits are requested in Year 3 of this budget.

*Travel:* In order to have three Project Leads attend the two- and one-half day project directors’ conference in Washington, DC, we are requesting $3,600.

*Equipment:* No equipment costs are requested in Year 3 of this budget.

*Supplies:* No supply costs are requested in Year 3 of this budget.

*Contractual:* The projected cost for contractors to deploy the professional learning content with cohort two and deploy the mentoring experience for cohort one in Year 3 is $160,000.

*Construction:* No construction costs are requested in Year 3 of this budget.

*Other:* (1) Website contribution for the hosting of the online learning modules and
community of practice; and other technologies that will be utilized for the virtual meetings in Year 3 are expected to cost $6,400.

**Total Direct Costs:** $170,000

**Participation Stipends:** (1) Participant stipends are requested for the sixteen participants in cohort two at $1,000 per person to cover professional learning experience expenses such as substitute costs, time away from work needed, and any in-home technology needed to fully participate ($16,000). (2) Participant stipends are requested for the twelve participants in cohort one who will complete their mentoring experience in Year 3 at $1,000 per person to cover substitute costs, time away from work, and travel to meet with mentor, as needed ($12,000).

**Total Costs for Year 3:** $198,000

**Year 4 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024).** In Year four of the grant, Ohio is requesting $200,000 across the following categories of expense. In addition to these dollars, Ohio will provide $70,000 in Year 4 of in-kind state dollars (35% match) of under the category of personnel.

**Personnel:** No personnel costs are requested in Year 4 of this budget. 15% of the Project Director and 20% of the Age 3 – Grade 3 Project Lead’s time will be contributed as in-kind.

**Fringe Benefits:** No fringe benefits are requested in Year 4 of this budget.

**Travel:** In order to have three Project Leads attend the two- and one-half day project directors’ conference in Washington, DC, we are requesting $3,600.

**Equipment:** No equipment costs are requested in Year 4 of this budget.

**Supplies:** No supply costs are requested in Year 4 of this budget.
Contractual: The projected cost for contractors to deploy the professional learning content with cohort three and deploy the mentoring experience for cohort two in Year 4 is $160,000.

Construction: No construction costs are requested in Year 4 of this budget.

Other: (1) Website contribution for the hosting of the online learning modules and community of practice; and other technologies that will be utilized for the virtual meetings in Year 4 are expected to cost $4,400.

Total Direct Costs: $168,000

Participation Stipends: (1) Participant stipends are requested for the sixteen participants in cohort three at $1,000 per person to cover professional learning experience expenses such as substitute costs, time away from work needed, and any in-home technology needed to fully participate ($16,000). (2) Participant stipends are requested for the sixteen participants in cohort two who will complete their mentoring experience in Year 4 at $1,000 per person to cover substitute costs, time away from work, and travel to meet with mentor, as needed ($16,000).

Total Costs for Year 4: $200,000

Year 5 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025). In Year five of the grant, Ohio is requesting $184,000 across the following categories of expense. In addition to these dollars, Ohio will provide $64,400 in Year 5 of in-kind state dollars (35% match) of under the category of personnel.

Personnel: No personnel costs are requested in Year 5 of this budget. 15% of the Project Director and 20% of the Age 3 – Grade 3 Project Lead’s time will be contributed as in-kind.
Fringe Benefits: No fringe benefits are requested in Year 5 of this budget.

Travel: In order to have three Project Leads attend the two- and one-half day project directors’ conference in Washington, DC, we are requesting $3,600.

Equipment: No equipment costs are requested in Year 5 of this budget.

Supplies: No supply costs are requested in Year 5 of this budget.

Contractual: The projected cost for contractors to deploy the mentoring experience for cohort three in Year 5 is $140,000.

Construction: No construction costs are requested in Year 5 of this budget.

Other: (1) Website contribution for the hosting of the online learning modules and community of practice; and other technologies that will be utilized for the virtual meetings in Year 5 are expected to cost $4,400. (2) Third-party evaluation consultation is expected to cost $20,000 in Year 5.

Total Direct Costs: $168,000

Participation Stipends: (1) Participant stipends are requested for the sixteen participants in cohort three who will complete their mentoring experience in Year 5 at $1,000 per person to cover substitute costs, time away from work, and travel to meet with mentor, as needed ($16,000).

Total Costs for Year 4: $184,000
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources Needs to Accomplish Project</th>
<th>Activities Actions to Accomplish Project</th>
<th>Outputs Evidence of Project Accomplishment</th>
<th>Short-Term Outcomes Expected Results in 1 – 4 Years</th>
<th>Long-Term Outcomes Expected Results in 5 – 6 Years</th>
<th>Impact Goal Expected Changes as a result of Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Knowledgeable Project Management Team  
• Funds to support time & effort  
• Meaningful engagement of stakeholders  
• Alignment of Project with other state initiatives to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of students with disabilities  
• Collaboration, coordination, and cooperation with state agency and organizational partners | • Communicate about the project  
• Develop project components  
• Implement project  
• Evaluate the quality of project components, delivery of project, and progress on expected outcomes  
• Report progress and outcomes measures regularly through project period | • Create, deliver, & evaluate project Professional Learning Experience  
• Create, deliver & evaluate project Mentoring Experience  
• Recruit & Retain Fellows  
• Create, deliver, & evaluate aligned project Core Competencies | • Increase the knowledge, skills, and leadership capacity of early childhood leaders  
• Impact communities serving children with disabilities and their families by identifying and resolving relevant problems of practice  
• Increase the competence and confidence of early childhood leaders to assess and implement evidence-based strategies in the places they work  
• Increase the competence and confidence of early childhood leaders to lead needed systems improvement in the places they work | • All short-term outcomes are also expected through Year 5 of the project period, and  
• An aligned set of competencies for the knowledge, skills, and leadership capacity for working with young children with disabilities and their families so that professionals outside of the participating communities can benefit from the project | Enhance the skills, knowledge, and leadership capacity of early childhood leaders so that they can impact the development and education of children with disabilities and their families in meaningful and intentionally positive ways. |
Ohio practices a building block approach to school improvement (i.e., one where districts with more need are entitled to receive services in more areas) aligns three inter-related areas of practice in order to ensure that districts get the support they need to prepare every student with foundational skills, reasoning skills, and social-emotional skills through equitable access to well-rounded content. These areas of practice include the following 1. Inclusive instructional and organizational leadership; 2. Capacity building through professional capital; and 3. Inclusive instructional practices.

_Inclusive instructional and organizational leadership_ – involves four key strategies that are actualized through a continuous improvement framework and associated leadership team structures. These strategies are: (1) promote system-wide learning; (2) prioritize the improvement of teaching and learning; (3) build capacity through support and accountability; and (4) sustain an open and collaborative culture.

_Capacity building through professional capital_ – is a key function of districts that is necessary to ensure every child, regardless of race, socio-economic status, or disability label, has equitable access to educators who are skilled and supported in the use of inclusive instructional practices. Capacity building involves the critical functions of selecting and developing all personnel through professional development and coaching and engaging all personnel in inquiry and learning processes through participation in peer-to-peer networks at the district. The effective development of individual and collective instructional capacity does not happen without effective leadership.

_Inclusive instructional practices_ – entails the effective use of inclusive instructional practices in all classrooms in all schools within a district. These practices are essential for every child, giving him or her rich and engaging opportunities to learn the foundational skills, academic content, reasoning skills, and social-emotional skills needed for life.