![Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council logo and photograph of a teacher with young children]

Silver State KIDS

(Kindergarten Inventory of Development Statewide)

Nevada's Plan and Recommendations for Implementing an Assessment at Kindergarten Entry and Coordinated Early Childhood Data System

2013-2015

A project of the
Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council managed by the Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office

Nevada's children will be safe, healthy and thriving during the first eight years of life, and the system will support children and families in achieving their full potential.

-- Vision of the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

CASE AND CONSIDERATION FOR **SILVER STATE KIDS**

The Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (NECAC), managed by Nevada's Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems (HSC&ECS) Office, in collaboration with the Nevada Department of Education (NDE), is leading efforts to build a comprehensive system of early childhood services across the state, so that all children enter school ready to learn.

Beginning in January 2012, a dual-focus needs assessment and planning process was launched to determine the feasibility and facilitate county-level implementation of a statewide approach to kindergarten assessment, supported by a coordinated early childhood data system that is linked to Nevada's K-12 longitudinal data system. Both the assessment and data system elements were priority components of Nevada's 2010 Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application, which articulated the following related goals:

1. Administer a common, statewide kindergarten assessment that generates data which educators are trained to use in order to improve program outcomes for children.

2. Implement effective data practices that link to a statewide early childhood development data system and support early childhood educators to understand and utilize child assessment data to improve programs, curriculum and environments.

Although Nevada was not selected for RTT-ELC, there was broad consensus and support from the early childhood education and care (ECE) community that these goals should still be an important focus for the NECAC. This initiative has come to be known as **Silver State KIDS** (Kindergarten Inventory of Development Statewide).

This report summarizes the implementation plan and recommendations that resulted from the extensive needs assessment process that culminated in early Fall 2012 with a statewide Planning Summit. It is the intention that this work positions the NECAC, school districts across the state, and other primary stakeholders to successfully implement **Silver State KIDS**. Companion reports can be accessed on the project [website](#).[1]

Rationale for a Statewide Systems Approach

There is an increasing acknowledgement in Nevada, as in the rest of the nation, that a quality early childhood education is an important component of longer-term student success. High-quality early education programs have been found to be cost-effective and beneficial, resulting in positive long-term educational outcomes and subsequent adult outcomes (Ramey & Ramey, 2004). This understanding has created a sense of urgency related to measuring young children's educational progress and readiness to enter school during their Pre-K years in order to:

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[1] go to https://sites.google.com/site/prototypeforkedsnevada/general-information/research

1. Improve understanding about what parents, educators, and communities can do, beginning at birth, to help children become school-ready;

2. Identify students who would benefit from intervention and other services; and

3. Inform local and state policy and program improvement decisions.

In order to build a comprehensive statewide ECE system that supports the ability of all children to enter kindergarten ready to be successful in school, a shared definition of school readiness for Nevada needed to be developed. The following school readiness definition was drafted, reviewed and eventually adopted as part of the needs assessment that led to this implementation plan.

READY FAMILIES +READY EDUCATORS + READY SCHOOLS + READY COMMUNITIES + READY SYSTEMS = CHILDREN ARE READY FOR SCHOOL.

The elements of this equation are defined as follows:

"Ready Families" have adults who understand they are the most important people in the child's life, understand age appropriate development, and support the child's school readiness. Adults recognize their role as the child's first and most important teacher, providing steady and supportive relationships, ensuring safe and consistent environments, promoting good health, and fostering curiosity and excitement about learning.

"Ready Educators" are skilled teachers, who understand age appropriate development, possess the skills to develop appropriate curriculum based on children's development, recognize, reinforce, and extend children's strengths and who are sensitive to cultural values and individual differences, including children with special needs.

"Ready Schools" accept all children and provide a seamless transition to a high-quality developmentally appropriate learning environment by engaging families and the whole community. A ready school welcomes all children and their families with opportunities to enhance and build confidence in their skills, knowledge, and abilities. Children in ready schools are led by ready educators.

"Ready Communities" play a crucial part in supporting families in their role as primary stewards of children's readiness. Ready communities, including businesses, faith-based organizations, early childhood service providers, community groups and local governments, work together to support children's school and long term success by providing families affordable access to information, services, high-quality child care, and early learning opportunities.

"Ready Systems" describes the availability, quality, and affordability of proven programs that influence child development and school readiness. It also includes the degree to which public and private agencies promote policies and practices including data collection that enhance access to needed supports, information and tools that help all other components (family, educators, schools and children) be ready for children to be ready for school. [2]

The Case for Assessment at Kindergarten Entry

In educational practice, assessing what children "know and can do" is a continuous process that aligns with curriculum to ensure that intended outcomes are addressed and monitored (McLean, 2010) (Snow, 2011). Schools and districts may have preferences regarding how to assess children, and may reasonably assert that assessment should be locally defined. However, the reality of Nevada's high transiency rates is that many children do not remain in the same school, and close to half of all students (44%) change schools at least once between kindergarten and the end of third grade (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers - PARCC). [3]

Research indicates that up to half of school difficulties are already apparent by the time children start school (Rouse, Brooks-Gunn, & McClanahan, 2004) and gaps in cognitive development are apparent as early as nine months of age (Ille, et al., 2009). Kindergarten assessment is important because it addresses the key question: "How are the children doing?" (Schultz, Zazlow, & Frede 2012). The timing of kindergarten entry assessment makes it possible to close a "school readiness opportunity" before it becomes an "achievement gap".

With respect to **Silver State KIDS**, the consensus among stakeholders is that the goal of kindergarten assessment is to gather information about what children know and can do upon entry, to help shape individualized instruction. This emerging system of formative assessment in kindergartens is planned to improve educational outcomes for all Nevada's children. Use of formative assessment can help to plan curriculum, enable differentiated instruction, further engage families in their child's learning and development, and guide professional development needs. Large scale implementation of child assessments helps to identify system strengths and gaps, and can be used to inform policy, leverage resources, and improve practice.

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[2] Bruner, C. and Coperman, A. (2003, March). Measuring children's school readiness: options for developing state baselines and benchmarks. A paper prepared for the State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network, pp. 1-2.
[3] The average transiency rate is 29.6% according to the Nevada Department of Education.

The Case for Effective and Efficient Data Sharing

There are a number of state agencies responsible for various components of Nevada's ECE system, including funding, policy development, licensing and accreditation, professional development, certification, and quality monitoring. The graphic below depicts the various agencies and entities at both the state and non-state level that fund, regulate, oversee and support the early childhood education, care and support services that make up Nevada's ECE system. [4]

Nevada Early Childhood System

*Designates state-funded programs; all others are funded through federal funds and/or other sources.
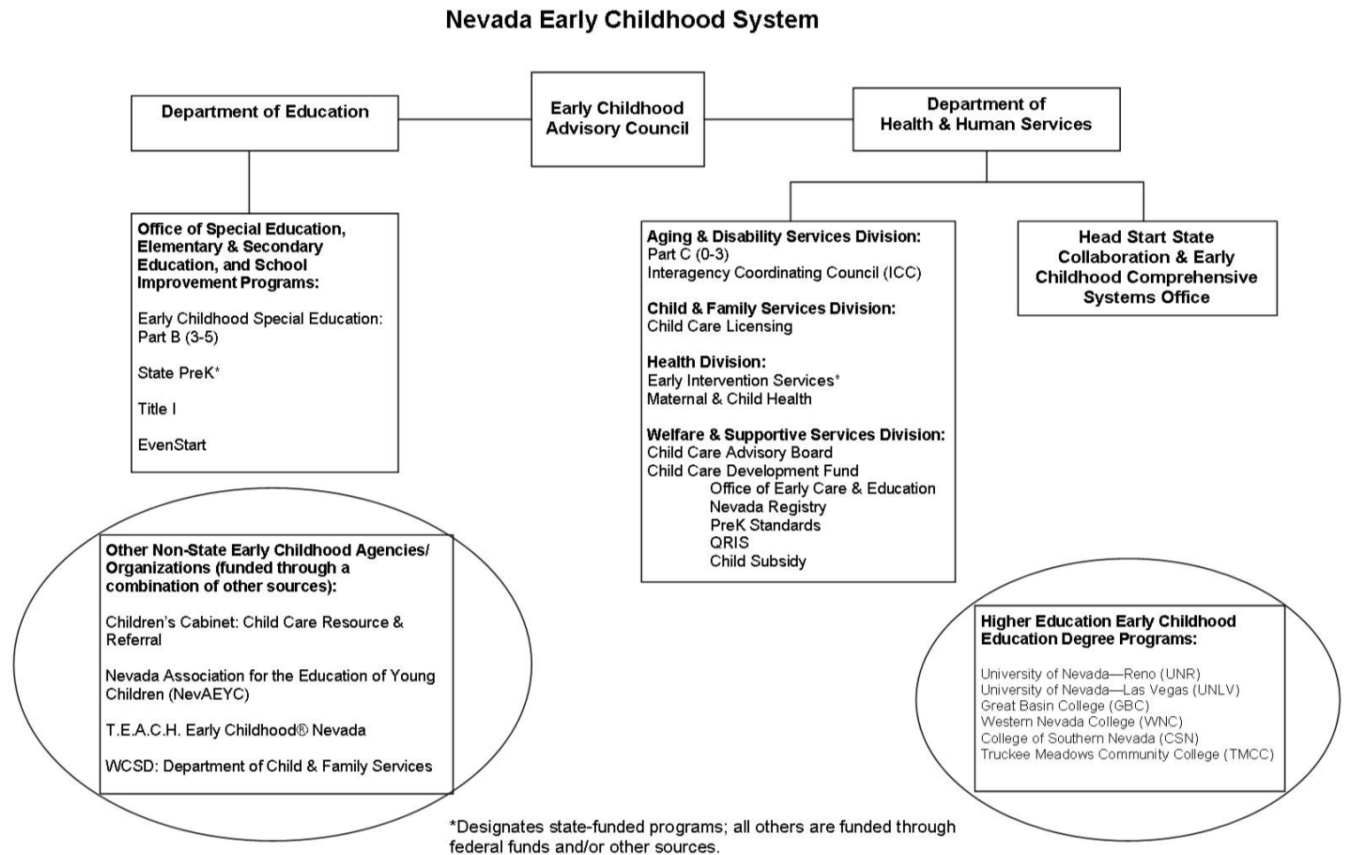
ECE in Nevada includes an array of programs and components (e.g. Silver State Stars, Nevada Registry, Nevada Early Intervention System, State Pre-K, and Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems, Child Care Licensing among many others) that each have their own objectives, and are also organized around shared goals.

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[4] Nevada Pre-K Standards: revised and Approved 2010. Building a Foundation for School Readiness and Success in Pre-K and Beyond.

Families access early care and education for their children through a number of programs and services. The table that follows summarizes the number of *publicly* funded early care and education programs in the state, which is augmented by the vast number of private home- and center-based providers and programs.

Type of ECE Programs in the State [5]	Number of programs in the State
State-funded preschool	11
Early Head Start and Head Start[6]	11
Programs funded by Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C	9
Programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619	17
Programs funded under Title I of The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)	86
Programs receiving Child Care Development Funds (CCDF)	367
Other- family child care home receiving CCDF	297

While there may be strengths in distributed leadership, there are very real challenges experienced by families and providers that work within and among these systems. Children moving within and among these programs and systems may experience very different care. Very little to no data is currently available within or across systems. These are barriers to improving quality statewide. A truly coordinated system would benefit Nevada's children, families, and providers, in many ways including:

- Alignment of early learning standards and program quality ratings or criteria
- Professional development on implementing assessments and understanding and using information from assessment
- A database with checks on data quality (including data entry) and protections for data privacy; providing the basis for reports to varied audiences according to purpose
- Resources sufficient for conducting timely assessments with reliability appropriate for purpose, and for preparing summaries of data presented in a useful way
- Monitoring of alignment; adequacy of professional development; minimizing burden on educators, families and children; reliability with which assessments are conducted, and use of reports.

Even though Nevada has limited information that applies to <u>all</u> young children in the state, these agencies do maintain a great deal of information about specific programs and services and about the programs and providers of those services. In order to build a connected ECE system, it is imperative for these agencies to interact and coordinate their respective assessment and data activities and policies.

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[5] Excerpted from Nevada's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Application, 2011.

[6] Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

SUMMARY OF ASSETS, NEEDS AND CHALLENGES

To understand the existing assets and needs of Nevada stakeholders, a large, inclusive and flexible needs assessment process preceded planning. The needs assessment was launched in 2012 to ensure that each of Nevada's counties was actively engaged to provide input in determining the feasibility for adopting a statewide approach. This process began in February of 2012 at the School Readiness Summit, where the Nevada-specific definition of *school readiness* (see Appendix E) was shaped, which was formally adopted in June 2012 by the Nevada ECAC Extensive outreach and engagement activities included:

- ✓ 280 stakeholders registered for Constant Contact list serve
- ✓ 201 providers and stakeholders completed surveys
- ✓ 537 parents and caregivers completed surveys
- ✓ 72 interviews, presentations, webinars, focus groups and site visits were conducted statewide
- ✓ Questionnaires were sent to all of Nevada's Tribal Head Start programs

The following summary captures some of the assets, needs and challenges that Nevada faces as it proceeds with implementation of a statewide kindergarten assessment and the development of an ECE data system that is linked to the statewide longitudinal data system (SLDS). The needs assessment reports that are companion documents to this plan provide further background and detail.

Assets to be Leveraged
- Shared interest in collaborating and engaging in professional learning communities
- Broad support for implementing a statewide assessment at kindergarten entry
- Agreement about priorities to address
- Broad support for the working definition of school readiness
- Engagement of stakeholders across the state
- Existing data and kindergarten assessment infrastructure (at the county level)
- Some mapping of assets is already included in the ECE Data Systems Report
- State Longitudinal Data System, including new funding focused on linking K-12 data with workforce and employment data
- Striving Readers
- P-3 Initiative
- Nevada Report Card
- P-16 Council, Nevada ECAC, local ECACS, State Head Start Collaboration
- Assigning unique statewide child identifier at K-12 level
- Collecting demographic program participation type of information about individual children in ECE program

Needs to be Addressed
- Funding for assessments (per child), training costs and technology infrastructure
- Accessible high quality ECE and kindergarten programs that meets children's needs
- Shared understanding of how data should be used
- Appropriate assessments for children with disabilities
- Assessment with English Language Learners
- Preferences for kindergarten assessment and existing assessment tools
- Differences in purposes for assessment among different agencies
- Diversity of existing tools and processes
- Organizational autonomy
- District decision making
- Connecting individual child-level data to social service agencies
- Collecting structural standards, workplace environment and quality measures information about ECE programs
- Linking ECE workforce identifiers with program sites and children

Key Challenges & Critical Issues
- Service capacity and children's access to Pre-K programs
- Geographic disparity
- Student mobility and transiency
- Fragmentation and inconsistency among systems
- Inappropriate use of data
- Insufficient resources to adequately analyze data
- Insufficient data availability, access and utility
- Insufficient local resources and infrastructure
- Varying accountability standards
- Data interoperability and confidentiality concerns
- Student diversity and cultural competency

APPROACH

Kindergarten Assessment: Eight Best Practices

Current research makes the case and sets the background for the assessment process. Guiding practices that helped to shape the planning process include the need to:

1. Select a quality assessment that has been validated and is reliable for the purpose it will be used.
2. Use developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate assessments that are inclusive of families. Assess young English Language Learners in their home language.

3. Implement an assessment that will benefit all children. Kindergarten readiness assessment is not used as a means for screening children into or out of kindergarten.
4. Ensure that assessors are qualified to use the instrument.
5. Include assessment in multiple developmental domains.
6. Ensure assessment is continuous and data reporting is timely.
7. Ensure assessment is aligned with learning curriculum to ensure intended outcomes are addressed and monitored.
8. Acknowledge that child-level data from assessment is only one component of a comprehensive system assessment.

Early Childhood Data System: Ten Fundamental Elements

The Early Childhood Data Quality Campaign (DQC) developed "Ten Fundamental Elements" needed to successfully align ECE data systems with P-20 statewide longitudinal data systems. These include:

1. Unique statewide child identifier
2. Child-level demographic and program participation information
3. Child-level data on development
4. Ability to link child-level data with K-12 and other data systems
5. Unique program site identifier tied to children and the ECE workforce
6. Program site data on the structure, quality and work environment
7. Unique ECE workforce identifier with the ability to link with program sites and children
8. ECE workforce data and demographics, including professional development data
9. State governance body to manage collection and use
10. Transparent privacy protection and security practices and policies

Key Assumptions for Silver State KIDS

Defined leadership will be provided consistent with the P-16 Council recommendations to implement **Silver State KIDS** with a leadership structure that clearly defines which state agency is ultimately responsible for implementation and the role of the NECAC. In consideration of the elements and best practices listed previously, the following assumptions were identified as critical to implementation of **Silver State KIDS.**

- Kindergarten assessment will be implemented and funded in a manner that will provide incentives for private ECE sites to participate. Participation of private providers will be encouraged but not mandated.
- Funding will be available to purchase an assessment for each participating child.
- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will be expanded to include all counties with the goal of facilitating adoption and implementation.
- A phased approach will be used to implement **Silver State KIDS**. The data system component will be beta tested and implemented in phases.
- Resource needs to be addressed will include training for teachers, technical assistance with school districts, hardware and software support statewide and at the district level.

✂ Should interest in participation during early phases exceed resources, priorities will be established to select participants based on numbers served and local investment of resources.

Planning and Decision Making Principles

The guiding principles for the **Silver State KIDS** planning process were defined in its early stages, during which the Nevada ECAC and the planning committee determined that the priorities and decision-making for the initiative would be steered by the following principles:

Comprehensive – all significant options and impacts are considered.

Efficient – the process should not waste time or money.

Inclusive – people affected by the plan have opportunities to be involved.

Informative – results are understood by stakeholders (people affected by a decision).

Integrated – individual, short-term decisions should support strategic, long-term goals.

Logical – each step leads to the next.

Transparent – everybody involved understands how the process operates.

In addition to good planning, good decision-making is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, skillful execution and represents the wise choice of many alternatives. This planning committee identified the following principles for decision-making related to this project:

- *Assign priorities* – All the things that need to be decided on are not equal in importance.
- *Data-based* – The most current information should be used to establish priorities and make informed decisions.
- *Paint a scenario of desired outcome* – Defining a specific vision is necessary to understand whether and when the desired outcomes have been achieved.
- *Critical analysis* – Explore the ramifications for all who will be affected. Understand the impact of decisions on all stakeholders.
- *Define the means for resolving conflict* – Consensus-based decision making is often complicated and sometimes involves some conflicts or dissatisfaction. In the absence of consensus, the ideal is to pick one solution where the benefits of the outcome outweigh the possible risks.

SELECTION OF A COMMON KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT

One of the primary planning tasks was to identify an assessment process or tool for Silver State KIDS that would add value to each of Nevada's diverse districts and counties. Toward that end,

work with individual counties and stakeholders identified the needs, preferences, and barriers related to the use of a common assessment method. Best practice in assessment with young children was also researched.

Below are the steps that resulted in a recommendation for Silver State KIDS:

1) Nevada's criteria for KEA were developed in alignment with RTT-ELC specifications and refined using Nevada's needs assessment process.
2) These criteria were validated with stakeholders via webinar and comment on the needs assessments.
3) A list of potential assessments for review were identified, paying special attention to those who are being used by Race to the Top winners and higher scoring RTT-ELC applicants.
4) Available assessment were compared to the criteria, and for those that meet these criteria, additional assets and benefits were explored.
5) Finalists were recommended for further review.
6) Feedback on the recommendation was solicited at the KEDS summit, resulting in a preliminary recommendation.
7) The NECAC voted to accept the recommendation.

Using this process, two assessments were considered as finalists based on the defined criteria. These were Pearson's Work Sampling Online and Teaching Strategies GOLD™. From these two finalists, Teaching Strategies GOLD™ was recommended because of advantages in several critical areas. These are outlined, below.

1) **Streamlined data entry.** Teaching Strategies GOLD™ has advanced features that have been developed to address other states' needs for streamlined data entry.
2) **Extensive reporting options.** Teaching Strategies GOLD™ has extensive reporting capabilities, and organizational infrastructure available to assist Nevada in analyzing and reporting data.
3) **Position as an instrument already in place in Nevada**. Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is used by many in Nevada including Head Start grantees and Clark County School District State Early Childhood / Special Education programs. Leveraging systems in place in Nevada was one of the criteria set forth in the needs assessment.
4) **Proven experience in implementing large-scale, statewide projects**. Roll out of this project across the state in the time scale identified will require considerable infrastructure, knowledge, and expertise. Teaching Strategies GOLD™ has been piloted and implemented in several other states. Staff are able to offer comprehensive implementation support that leverages learning from these large-scale and complex implementations. Teaching Strategies GOLD™ has been selected for statewide use for this specific purpose (KEA) in seven states. These are:

Washington, Delaware, New Jersey, Colorado , Massachusetts (Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is one of three approved options), Missouri (pilot) and Hawaii (pilot).[7]

5) **Flexibility to connect with existing data systems**. Teaching Strategies GOLD™ infrastructure can support statewide data and complex collection and reporting requirements, making it an asset for both assessment and for connection to Nevada's emerging early childhood data system.

6) **Opportunities for "train the trainer," along with checks for reliability**. Teachers need training to use the assessment. Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is one of several assessments that provides opportunities for a "train the trainer" model, but also offers an additional check that can help to ensure (or measure) inter-rater reliability available from any teacher's computer. Other technological supports including webinars and online resources to help prepare and support teachers using the assessment tool.

Other strengths identified include:

- Identity as a formative assessment and its ability to inform instruction
- Developmentally appropriate; authentic and observation-based
- Options to document learning over time, with up to three additional checkpoints available at no cost for kindergarten teachers
- Opportunities to facilitate communication with families and other stakeholders, including an interactive family portal
- Appropriate for use with any developmentally appropriate curriculum
- Measurements for all five domains of development as well as performance tasks

Feedback on the recommendation was solicited at meetings, presentations, and the KEDS summit held in October 2012. Overall, the responses from stakeholders were positive, with many expressing enthusiasm for statewide data, an assessment fully aligned to the Common Core State Standards, and capabilities of advanced reporting tools. Concerns were also noted. Please see Appendix C for more information about the recommendation of an assessment based on Nevada's criteria.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN OF THE DATA SYSTEM

It is anticipated that the development of a web-based data system that allows ECE data to be linked to K-12 data via the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) will serve multi-audience users, including:

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[7] Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is also used for several statewide pre-K initiatives, including: Alabama, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Colorado, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, Iowa, Nebraska, Washington DC, Kentucky, Vermont and Alaska.

- Teachers
- Pre-kindergarten programs
- Administrators
- Funders/policymakers

- Parents/family/caregivers
- Other districts
- Stakeholder agencies (e.g. Health Division)

The following graphic depicts the coordinated data system that was envisioned by stakeholders at the Planning Summit, which leverages Nevada's existing technology infrastructure and capacity at both the state and county level. In this approach, which is considered ideal in terms of cost, expediency and local control, ECE data would be integrated with local school district's information systems. Data could be aggregated at the State level via the existing Bighorn system. TSG would upload assessment data into the various district systems (e.g., Infinite Campus and Power School) which would then pull that data in a similar manner as is currently used for the normal local system-to-state system mapping process.

Graphic 1: Coordinated Data System Envisioned to Link P-20 Child Data

Abbreviations
- LSID: Local Student ID
- SSID: State Student ID
- SLDS: State Longitudinal Data System
- NSHE: Nevada System of Higher Education
- DETR: Dept. of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation
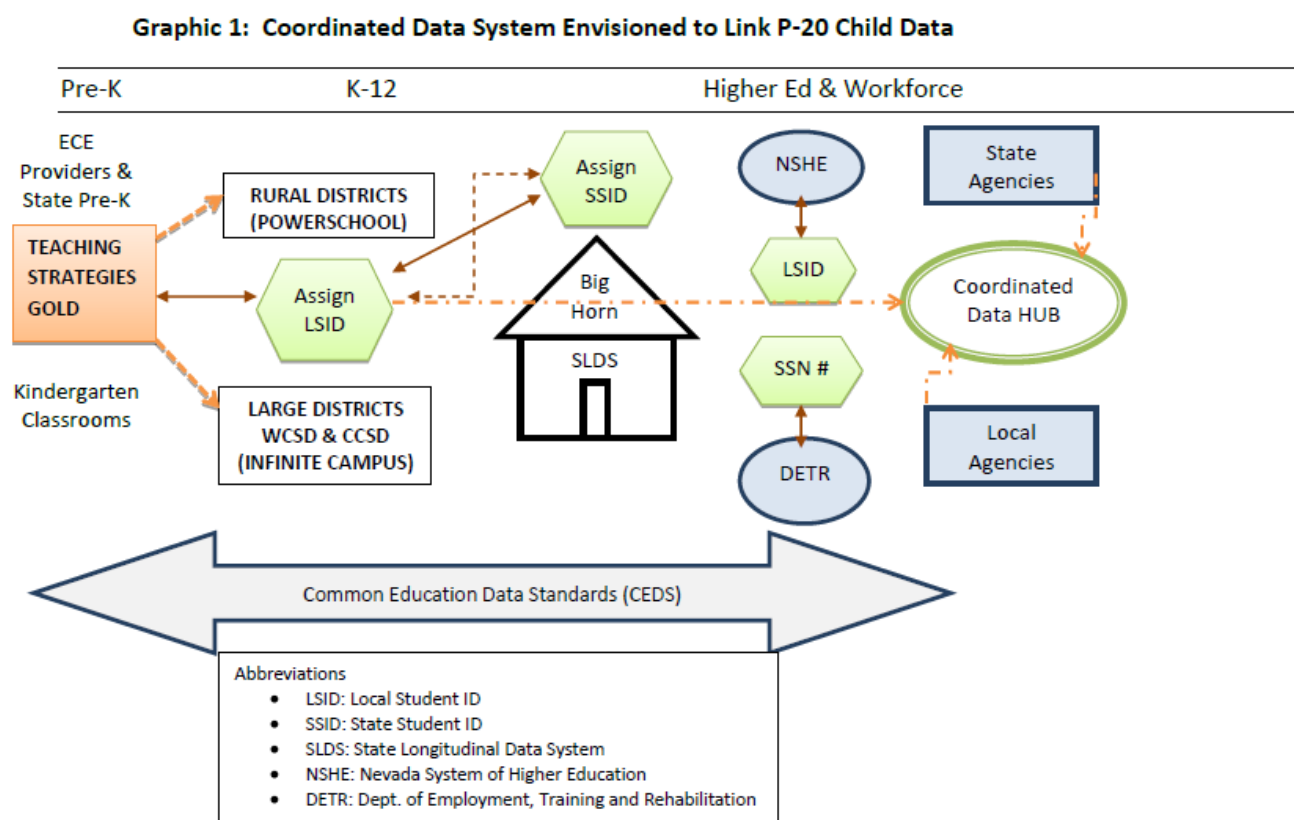
A significant advantage of this approach is that it shifts responsibility for data warehousing to the vendor instead of the State. Other advantages include the ability to obtain TSG data in local student information systems, which makes it more accessible for teachers, parents, and other primary users at the local level. Additionally, it facilitates the assignment of a unique identifier to children prior to kindergarten entry, which supports better data matching for students transitioning from one school or district to another. Finally, it promotes stronger parent buy-in when all users are working with common parameters, definitions and infrastructure related to both the assessment tool and the information system, so that expectations and understanding is

shared broadly about what data is available and how it can be accessed and utilized. Some of the key considerations in this proposed approach include the following:

- Development of shared data definitions - each system, for example, has attendance data, which may be called different things in each system, so there is a need to normalize the nomenclature and related definitions.

- NDE has created and developed a series of data mapping sequences that conforms data to a pre-determined set of tables in the state longitudinal data system.

- Elements are stored longitudinally, so that users can go back at any time to see past classes and assessment scores. This information including the child's growth can be used to help that child succeed.

- Constructing an ECE data system will involve creating a local system to assess children, for teachers to collect information to produce reports for parents, etc. and start collecting demographic data that other agencies may need for research purposes.

- Since NDE's key state agency partners, such as NSHE and DETR, already have longitudinal databases, it is not cost-effective or practical to build another data warehouse. The most viable alternative is to build a hub that connects all data systems together to request, match and exchange information. It is feasible that TSG could exist alongside other school district systems as an independent system and map data back to a state-based longitudinal warehouse as part of the hub design. The system has to be built, defined, and designed, determining which elements should be shared among agencies and then design that mapping so that data into the statewide system is consistent with what already exists.

A key piece of the work for Nevada as it creates a coordinated ECE data system that is linked to the K-12 SLDS is to identify the important questions that will guide what data should be included in the data system. These questions help explain the purpose of each data field, and help to prioritize the needs of the state. It is also important to understand that these questions often change over time, so this will become a part of the discussion and decision-making process during Phase I, as well as serve as a critical checkpoint throughout implementation. The key questions recommended for consideration by the data governance committee and the implementation workgroup are:

1. Are children, birth to 5, on track to succeed when they enter school and beyond?
2. Which children and families are and are not being served by which programs/services?
3. Which children have access to high-quality early childhood programs and services?
4. What characteristics of programs are associated with positive child outcomes for which children?
5. What are the educational and economic returns on early childhood investments?

Other considerations related to how data is defined include:

- **Developmental screening**: defining success, and addressing how outcomes in the early years impact later performance in school; not neglecting foster children, children with special needs, and other special populations;

- **Parental engagement**: how is it defined, measured, and impacted by such things as mobility, homelessness, and home schooling;

- **Participation rates**: access to programs and services, transition between programs, duplication, responsiveness of programs, program combinations, and earlier identification practices that contribute to children's greater involvement in quality programs;

- **Program quality**: how staff turnover, provider practices, curriculum, learning environment and professional development impact child outcomes; and

- **Family and health characteristics:** how family knowledge of child development, family socio-economic status, immunization rates, and such supports as home visitation and quality child care improve outcomes for children.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Implementation for **Silver State KIDS** will begin in 2013 and is anticipated to be implemented statewide by the end of the 2014-15 school year. The objective for this initiative is two-fold:

For Kindergarten Assessment: To implement a developmentally appropriate assessment by 2014 that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards and Nevada Pre-K Standards and responsive to feedback from the needs assessment process.

For a Coordinated Early Childhood Data System: To design a coordinated data system that captures information about how young children are doing that can be linked to the State Longitudinal Data System in order to provide policymakers with information about the quality of and access to ECE programs, and can be disaggregated in order to serve the distinct needs of specific districts and stakeholders to improve program effectiveness and address gaps in services.

MAJOR GOALS FOR **SILVER STATE KIDS**

Because the two components of **Silver State KIDS** are linked, the five major goals of implementation are integrated and systemic.

GOAL 1: Nevada Early Childhood Stakeholders Possess A Shared Understanding And Measurement Of School Readiness.

Develop a shared understanding of school readiness across Nevada that utilizes common data elements to inform the school readiness domains, and establish common data standards to ensure that data fields represent the same type of information when linking databases.

GOAL 2: Data Collection and Use Policies are Coordinated Across Agencies.

Collect data on what children know and can do upon entry to kindergarten for the purpose of improving instruction and educational outcomes for Nevada's children. Define what data are needed to support a true growth model across the education continuum, and establish common data definitions and data use policies that are shared across agencies.

GOAL 3: Data-Driven Decision Making is Enabled.

Programs and schools (serving children birth through third grade) will have information and resources to support all children's readiness for school. Develop an ECE data hub to enable data sharing with approved users about programs, including provider demographics, QRIS information, technical assistance, classroom quality assessment scores, workforce qualifications and retention, child demographics, enrollment, and child outcome information.

GOAL 4: Programs are Aligned.

Vertically align ECE programs spanning from ECE through third grade to help children achieve higher levels of social, emotional, and intellectual success. Relevant instruction and supports will be provided to children that are based on their individual strengths and areas for growth. Integrate data from publicly funded early childhood programs, including subsidized child care, Head Start, State Pre-K, early intervention, preschool special education, and home visiting.

GOAL 5: Families and Children are Supported.

Support transitions for children and their families through leadership, collaboration, and information sharing across systems and throughout the state, so that children and their families experience seamless pathways of learning. Provide parents/families/ caregivers with information about the ECE programs that are available and improve information exchange to support their child's growth. Share data with providers about children they are serving to improve individualized teaching and learning, and to support continuous quality improvement.

By accomplishing the goals outlined above, Nevada will emerge as a national leader and model for early learning. Significant progress will be achieved through bipartisan commitments, ongoing stakeholder engagement, and major private, federal and state public investments. The return on investments made in early childhood have been repeatedly proven in this country and abroad, in scientific literature as well as in sensible economic and social policy (Karoly, Kilburn, & Cannon , 2005). This includes lasting returns throughout the lifespan of individuals, families and communities in terms of health, prosperity, and wellbeing.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

The anticipated outcomes of implementation include the following:

1. Programs and schools (serving children birth through third grade) will have information and enhanced resources to support *all* children's readiness for school.

2. ECE programs will be inclusive and supportive of children with different assets, skills, and needs.

3. Families, educators, schools, communities and state agencies will have a shared understanding of school readiness and support children's development and learning, recognizing the importance of early childhood experiences to school success.

4. A system of formative assessment in kindergarten will facilitate improved instruction and educational outcomes for Nevada's children. Awareness, acknowledgement and documentation of children's development and skills will help to close the school readiness opportunity so that achievement gaps are minimized in the future. Children receive relevant instruction and supports based on their individual strengths and needs.

5. Improved vertical alignment among ECE, kindergarten, and primary grades will help children achieve higher levels of social, emotional, and intellectual success. Children and families will experience seamless pathways of learning.

In addition to these overarching outcomes, each phase of implementation will be focused on achieving a specific sub-goal. These are delineated below, along with the key benchmarks and milestones that will serve as markers toward the accomplishment of the sub-goal for each phase.

Phase I (2013-14): Early learning will become a statewide priority.

BENCHMARKS AND MILESTONES

✖ **Silver State KIDS** will build buy-in from business, government and philanthropic leaders. Leaders implementing **Silver State KIDS** are expected to work closely with state leadership and a statewide governance structure for Nevada's early childhood system.

✖ Sub-grants will be distributed to local districts and ECACs to build capacity for **Silver State KIDS** implementation, as well as public and parent awareness of the importance of early learning.

✖ Local and statewide partnerships and data sharing agreements will be established and formalized.

✖ Nevada will participate in the national Common Education Data System (CEDS) initiative and upload its data dictionary to support establishment of common data definitions and policies within the state.

Phase II (2014-15): A statewide system of assessment that supports school readiness will become established in the majority of Nevada counties.

BENCHMARKS AND MILESTONES

✖ The Phase I evaluation results will be disseminated to support refinement and broader participation in **Silver State KIDS** for both public and private ECE programs.

- Policy and planning work will focus on establishing cross-system Memoranda of Understanding related to data sharing and collaborative funding arrangements that support Nevada's early childhood programming.

- Formal agreements will foster sustainable funding and support from private entities and media outlets that continue to raise awareness about the importance of early learning.

- A statewide messaging campaign will be launched that supports a shared understanding across all of Nevada's communities about what everyone can do to support school readiness for all children in the state.

PHASED APPROACH: STRATEGIES, TIMELINE, AND RESOURCES

The strategies to accomplish these five goals are designed to occur in phases, beginning with the launch of Phase I to begin early in 2013 with planning activities. At the start of the 2013-14 school year, districts that are regionally representative of Nevada's small, medium and large counties, will be selected through a structured process to begin and evaluate the use of a common kindergarten assessment (*Teaching Strategies GOLD™).*

	Phase I Strategies and Tasks	Timeline (2013-14)			
	Kindergarten Assessment Implementation	Mar-May	Jun-Aug	Sept-Nov	Dec-Feb
1	Conduct joint meeting with NDHHS and NDE leadership, in conjunction with school district leadership, to formalize buy-in for recommended phased approach.	X			
2	Invite Letters of Interest/Intent from Superintendents to participate in Phase 1. Determine the best approach for phasing that encourages modeling and allows flexibility and accommodates the use of different systems. Should funding be limited, additional processes such as an application may be needed to finalize Phase I participants.	X			
3	Provide an update to all stakeholders on progress of Silver State KIDS.				
4	Select a minimum of four districts to participate in Phase I, completing training and observational assessments in 2013.	X			
5	Convene specialized workgroup(s) of educators and specialists with representation from select pilot counties to determine key issues related to timing, cost, logistics, training, and resource needs. [8]	X			

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[8] A few states have selected a subset of objectives to measure, rather than all 38. In Year 1, it is recommended that Nevada implement all 38; in the future Nevada can work with the vendor to develop a more streamlined version maintains the psychometric properties of the assessment.

	Phase I Strategies and Tasks	Timeline (2013-14)			
6	Define parameters for timing of assessment administration, to include considerations for full day and half-day kindergarten and non-traditional calendars. [9]		X		
7	Develop a training calendar. The training calendar must include a train the trainer learning institute, two-day initial training for all teachers using the assessment in Phase I, and training for administrators in understanding and using assessment data.		X		
8	Verify the evaluation questions for Phase I of evaluation and develop an evaluation plan.	X			
9	Conduct training institute to train up to 25 trainers on TSG in year one. Trainers will need to complete all online training modules and then participate in a 2-day institute to enable them to train other teachers on the assessment. [10]		X		
10	Schedule and train local teachers participating in Phase I. Based on the calendar and recommendations from the workgroup, participating teachers will train for two-days to become fluent in the assessment. Online modules are available for follow-up questions as well as to address any unanticipated teacher turnover.		X		
11	Create a communication plan that clearly articulates how each stakeholder group will receive communication throughout the project. Include the individuals that requested e-mail updates. Incorporate information on **Silver State KIDS** into existing family engagement activities, such as parent teacher conferences.		X		
12	Conduct Phase I assessments. Work with vendor to ensure broad understanding of data collected once Phase I is complete.		X	X	
13	Evaluate the results of Phase I implementation, answering to the degree possible the evaluation questions. Evaluation should include recommendations to improve the next phase of implementation.			X	X
Coordinated ECE Data System Implementation		Mar-May	Jun-Aug	Sept-Nov	Dec-Feb

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[9] In order to collect information about what children know and can do upon entry to kindergarten, timing needs to be close to the start of the year, with adequate time available to make observations, and complete documentation. The workgroup may consider and consult with teachers and TSG to ensure that the completion dates balance the needs for consistent statewide administration with other teacher responsibilities. It is important that assessments be completed no later than the 8th week of kindergarten; however, the group may consider requiring an earlier completion date.

[10] The workgroup may also decide whether to require that teacher complete inter-rater reliability (IRR) certification prior to completing their first assessments. IRR certification is available for TSG from any online computer.

	Phase I Strategies and Tasks	Timeline (2013-14)			
1	Designate a state-level interagency data governance structure. Work with the P-16 Council to develop a state data governance body to set state policies that guide data collection, access, and use. [11]	X	X		
2	Identify a data governance coordinator. The data governance coordinator should have authority to manage the data governance process across all participating agencies/programs and serve as liaison between the committees.		X		
3	Design interagency policies to ensure data quality; protect privacy, security, and confidentiality; and ensure interoperability between new and existing state data systems.		X	X	
4	Define the common data elements that will best inform the school readiness domains, and establish common data standards to ensure that data fields represent the same type of information when linking databases.		X		
5	Outline what data and processes are needed to support a true growth model across the education continuum, and establish common data definitions and data use policies that are shared across agencies for the identified data elements.			X	
6	Establish data-sharing agreements to develop formal documents that define how data would be linked and used.			X	X
7	Provide parents/families/caregivers with information about the ECE programs available to them and improve information exchange to support their children's development.			X	X
8	Provide programs and services with information about the children they are serving to improve individualized teaching and learning, and to inform and support continuous quality improvement.			X	X
9	Determine what demographic data is needed and how associated data will be stored, guided by workgroup recommendations and TSG.				X
10	Conduct technology feasibility study in each school district and county to determine infrastructure assets and needs.[12]			X	X
11	Determine any outstanding resource and training needs, to be formalized and addressed by the educator workgroup.[13]			X	X

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[11] Excellent guidance is available at: nces.ed.gov/programs/slds/pdf/brief4_P_20W_DG.pdf

[12] NDE will take responsibility for this activity.

[13] While it is not anticipated that teachers using assessment will require additional resources, there may be opportunities and resource requests that emerge. For example, schools may wish to pilot use of tablets to streamline documentation.

Phase II Strategies and Tasks		Timeline (2014-15)			
Kindergarten Assessment Implementation		Mar-May	Jun-Aug	Sept-Nov	Dec-Feb
1	Convene a workgroup that includes private ECE providers to address how to encourage voluntary participation for privately funded pre-K programs. Identify strategies for improved communication between pre-K programs serving children ages birth to five with kindergarten and primary grade classrooms.	X	X	X	X
2	Provide guidance on opportunities to streamline assessments so that programs and districts can analyze which existing assessment tools and processes can be replaced with Silver State KIDS, depending on the purposes of the assessment.		X	X	
3	Launch communications plan to share findings from Phase I with parents, agencies, districts, ECE programs, and other stakeholders.	X	X		
4	Train additional teachers and program staff designated for participation in Phase II.	X			
5	Develop user-friendly and efficient reporting and information sharing mechanisms that facilitate data sharing with districts, classrooms, and families about child progress.		X	X	
6	Establish peer support forums that encourage idea and information sharing across districts and regions of the state.			X	X
7	Evaluate the results of Phase II implementation, answering to the degree possible the evaluation questions.			X	X
8	Add assessment data from ECE programs participating in the state's QRIS into a community-level data mapping tool.				X
Coordinated ECE Data System Implementation		Mar-May	Jun-Aug	Sept-Nov	Dec-Feb
1	Design a federated child-level database that builds on and links select data from the public health data system, the child welfare system, and other agencies to the K–12 longitudinal data system.	X	X	X	X
2	Design a process for assigning a single, non-duplicated identifier to each child, ECE program site, and member of the ECE workforce to accurately match records among datasets that represent the same child, program site, or provider/teacher and to facilitate matching records across databases.	X	X		
3	Work with assessment vendor to integrate data with local information systems at the district level, via upload into district systems (e.g. Infinite Campus, Power School).	X	X		
4	Define how pre-K sites will use the assessment, and, develop data sharing agreements to facilitate integration of the data.		X		
5	Design and develop stakeholder-specific data portals to streamline		X	X	

	Phase II Strategies and Tasks	Timeline (2014-15)			
	and improve the timeliness, completeness, and accuracy of system records related to the providers and consumers of ECE services.				
6	Disseminate data to local ECACs and the public through an open-source, web-based platform with enhanced data analysis and data visualization features to show time trends and compare data across geographic areas.			X	X
7	Work with the Nevada Head Start Association to link child-level demographic and developmental data and program site information for all Head Start and Early Head Start programs in the state to the statewide ECE data system.			X	X
8	Provide comprehensive training to ECE programs on the effective use of data and recommendations for using data to facilitate program improvement.				X
9	Use data sharing to support peer mentoring to facilitate improved outcomes.		X	X	X
10	Gather information relevant to data system design. Research if there are state IT standards that may influence data system design. If so, the system will need to align to the state standards. Research program, state, and federal privacy laws, and determine data requirements around access and confidentiality.			X	X

SETTING UP FOR SUCCESS

In the case that fewer than expected districts have completed the letter of interest for Phase 1, it is recommended that HSC/ECSO reaches out personally to superintendents or their representatives to understand barriers to participation and make changes as appropriate to engage participants. In the case that more districts and kindergarten students request Phase 1 participation, the following criteria may be helpful to determine the ideal participants in Phase 1:

1) **A mixture of small, medium, and large counties**. Nevada's geography is diverse, with 2 urban counties, several rural counties and many frontier counties. Representation of urban, rural, and frontier counties in Phase 1 will help to identify needs and challenges across the different settings.
2) **Interest in learning and evaluating the process.** Districts and their teachers that engage with Silver State KIDS will experience the challenges of implementing a new statewide endeavor. It is also an opportunity; early users of the assessment can help to shape and improve next steps in the process. Preference may be given to districts that have demonstrated interest and the capacity to engage in learning and reflection toward overall program improvements.
3) **Participation with early care and education.** This project is a component in a vision for an aligned, coordinated and seamless system for young children and their families, birth through third grade. Ideal participants in Phase 1 are districts that have

already begun partnerships with the early care and education providers in their community. Examples of demonstrated participation could include involvement in the county or regional ECAC (Early Childhood Advisory Council), participation in the Nevada's P-3 initiative, and integration of preschool (e.g. State Pre-K, Title 1 Pre-K, Head Start) into district school sites.

4) **Classroom capacity for assessment.** Silver State KIDS is intended to serve all children. However, prior to Phase 1, there is limited information about what is needed in terms of teacher time for assessment and data entry. To ensure success in Phase 1, participating schools serve children in full-day classrooms and have teacher to child ratios that are within best practice range. Implementation in half-day classrooms and with higher student to teacher ratios will require additional knowledge, experience and resources, expected to develop in Phase 2.

5) **Plan for implementation.** Districts that have planned adequately for implementation of Silver State KIDS will be best positioned for success. Districts may consider replacing existing assessments by mapping TSG to their current efforts, creating meaningful opportunities for teachers to share strategies for success with assessment with families, and integrating new data into existing planning processes.

6) **Existing processes to engage families.** Sharing of assessment data with families is important; districts and schools that have in place successful processes for sharing information will be able to help shape and guide best practice for engaging families with their child's assessment information.

7) **Service to a diverse student population.** Key questions around the assessment include how well it will serve the entire student population. Implementation in Phase 1 with students that represent the state in terms of language, special education status, and demographics will help to identify improvements needed in the tool or training process moving forward.

BUDGET AND JUSTIFICATION

The following budget is preliminary, and has been submitted to the Office of the Governor for consideration in conjunction with the current legislative session. This budget may need to be modified pending approval.

Primary Tasks	*Budget*	*Timeline*
• Select counties to participate in Phase I. • Design common reporting document that replaces misaligned reporting requirements for providers, educators and districts. • Define core data elements to be tracked. • Conduct technology feasibility study in all school districts and counties to determine hardware, software and application	9520[14] @ $8.95 ea= $85,204 Training [15]– $54,000 Software and application development (NDE contractual)- $167,500	**Phase I – Start-up**

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[14] This represents 20% of children enrolled in Kindergarten and State pre-K from urban districts and all children in Kindergarten and State pre-K in up to six rural counties.
[15] The # of teachers that would be trained is estimated at 400.

Primary Tasks	Budget	Timeline
development needs. • Develop a state-level interagency data governance structure. • Design policies to ensure data quality; protect privacy, security, and confidentiality; and ensure interoperability between new and existing state data systems. • Provide training and technical assistance to build user capacity to interpret and utilize available data. • Establish data-sharing agreements. • Conduct pilot study evaluation.	Technology Feasibility Study (NDE contractual)- $150,000 Personnel/Fringe/ Travel- $60,239 Equipment and supplies – $90,000 Subgrants and indirect costs- $170,000 **$776,943.00**	**2013-14** **(Year 1)**
• Develop a system of incentives and accountability that supports voluntary participation in the ECE data system. • Design a federated child-level database that builds on and links select data from the public health data system, the child welfare system, and other agencies to the K–12 longitudinal data system. • Provide comprehensive training to ECE programs on the effective use of data and using data to facilitate program improvement. • Work with the Nevada Head Start Association to link child-level demographic and developmental data and program site information for all Head Start and Early Head Start programs in the state to the statewide ECE data system. • Add assessment data from prekindergarten and child care programs participating in the state's QRIS into a community-level data mapping tool. • Design and develop stakeholder-specific data portals to streamline and improve the timeliness, completeness, and accuracy of system records related to the providers and consumers of ECE services. • Disseminate data to local ECACs and the public through an open-source, web-based platform with enhanced data analysis and data visualization features to show time trends and compare data across geographic areas. • Design a process for assigning single, non-duplicated identifiers at child, program and educator level to enable accurate record matching among diverse datasets.	43,000 children[16] (est. # in K) @ $8.95 ea = $384,850 Training – $54,000 Personnel/Fringe/ Travel- $69,160 Equipment and supplies – $190,000 Subgrants and Indirect costs- $170,000 **$868,010.00**	Phase II – Scaling Up **2014-15** **(Year 2)**

SPECIFIC RESOURCE NEEDS

While the budget presented above outlines the major activities associated with expenditures noted for each phase of implementation, there are some key elements that are further explained below.

TECHNOLOGY FEASIBILITY STUDY

In addition to funding for updated technology infrastructure, including bandwidth and hardware, all counties will require varying levels of support to bring their current capacity up to date to ensure that **Silver State KIDS** can be operational online. There is a known technology gap in Nevada's rural and frontier districts, so it is critical to secure an upfront commitment for the necessary funding and to design a system for information upload and exchange that is

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[16] 37,000 Kindergarteners + 4500 Head Start children + 1500 State Pre-K children =43,000 TOTAL children

network efficient, meaning that it uses minimal bandwidth and can be operated offline during peak periods and enable transmissions to be uploaded during non-peak times.

A technology feasibility study is recommended to identify specific needs and related costs for each school and ECE program in every county and district. Some work needs to go into understanding exactly what will be required and what communication is needed with families, administrators, and others at the local level in order to roll out the initiative successfully at the state agency level. A feasibility study is also needed to map what is already being used and can be streamlined and leveraged to allow adoption of TSG as a common assessment in a manner that does not place additional burden on teachers.

TRAINING

In anticipation of statewide implementation, a train the trainer model is recommended. Investment in the train the trainer model will enable Nevada's educators to train teachers locally. All **Silver State KIDS** training events and activities will be coordinated with existing training and professional development efforts to the maximum extent possible in order to leverage the resources already being allocated to ECE program and workforce development.

EVALUATION

Evaluation of Silver State KIDS will be an important activity to support ongoing process improvement and to understand its value to children, teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders. As a new statewide initiative, it will be important to learn throughout Phase I what has worked well and what can be improved. The evaluation plan should include the experiences and perspectives of administrators, teachers and families with **Silver State KIDS** so that subsequent phases can incorporate lessons learned.

NEXT STEPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In order for the implementation of Silver State KIDS to be successful and achieve its intended outcomes, it will be vital to:

1. Roll out implementation activities with the intent of communicating and sharing data, using data for marketing and engagement instead of just collection and monitoring;

2. Ensure that parents and teachers are partners in this process, helping to drive improvements needed to the system;

3. Encourage teachers and administrators to use assessment data and related resources;

4. Build a timeline for engaging specific stakeholders that will be essential to implementation, such as: special education staff, legislators and policy makers, culturally and linguistically diverse representatives, specialists, and community based organizations, among others;

5. Develop a strong communication plan—such as monthly reports, website, routinely scheduled meetings, and planned but informal relationship building exercises—to help the project keep momentum when sustainability becomes an issue during transitions in leadership.

Longer-term activities that will be required to establish a coordinated ECE data system include:

1. Design and develop an ECE data hub that would enable sharing of data with approved users on individual ECE program sites, including provider demographics, Quality Rating Implementation System (QRIS) information, technical assistance, classroom quality assessment scores, workforce qualifications and retention, child demographics, enrollment, and child outcome information.

2. Integrate data from publicly funded early childhood programs, including subsidized child care, Head Start, state prekindergarten, early intervention, preschool special education, and home visiting.

3. Create a new portal to provide user-friendly, web-based dashboards and reports tailored to educators, administrators, and parents. This will include reports that can link individual teachers to students and link child attendance to student assessment data. Look to other states, such as Wisconsin and Arkansas, for models.

4. Make data more accessible and useful, and provide training and technical assistance to build user capacity to interpret and utilize available data.

5. Develop a method for incorporating data from families who do not touch public programs until they reach the public school system.

By the end of Phase II, it is anticipated that growth and engagement in **Silver State KIDS** will result in long-term support and sustainability to make Nevada a national leader in early childhood. Private ECE providers will be increasingly engaged in participation as the benefits of participation are increasingly documented. As a result, improved access to quality ECE programs will be documented, and **Silver State KIDS** will be implemented broadly in order to reach the hardest-to-serve families and provide equal access to opportunity for all children in the state.

APPENDICES

A. WORKS CITED

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B. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluation questions have been developed to guide the next two years of implementation of Silver State KIDS. Development of an evaluation plan and process will help to ensure that the process is responsive to stakeholder needs.

Phase 1 – Assumes implementation in selected kindergarten classrooms statewide, completed within first 6 weeks of school, *with additional participation among Pre-K sites that feed to Phase 1 K classes.*

QUESTION	DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY
1. Do teachers feel prepared to use the assessment?	Issue brief surveys during and after training to assess gains in knowledge / skill and comfort with assessment.
2. Are scores across classrooms comparable?	Measure and describe inter-rater reliability and compare to acceptable / desired range (e.g. .80 or higher) prior to administration.
3. What elements of implementation were completed as planned?	Describe completeness and timeliness of assessment (using data from vendor) and compare to plan.
4. What is known about school readiness based on year 1 of assessment?	Develop a report template and analyze information on children's readiness from the assessment. Template should include data on students that participated, geographic representation, and percentage of children entering with demonstrated skills in each domain. Show data by pre-K and no pre-K and child's age. Analyze data by students that have pre-K and no pre-K, by time in a pre-K program, and by program, as appropriate.
5. What are teacher's experiences with the assessment? Consider topics such as value in instruction, ease of use, quality of training, etc. 6.	Develop a survey that can be completed confidentially. Teachers can say what worked well, what was difficult, and rate things like their preparedness to implement, use of the data, suggestions to improve, etc.
7. What are families' experiences with this information?	Develop methodology to sample parents of children assessed. Should include questions about whether families have an improved understanding of what they can do to support their child in kindergarten as a result of the assessment information. (And, for pre-K students, an improved understanding of what it takes to be ready for kindergarten.)

QUESTION	DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY
8. What are the ways in which information has been shared? With which partners?	Hold interviews with partners (State Pre-K, Head Start etc.) to understand 'baseline' practices for sharing data. Learn the ways in which they would want to share and have assessment data from schools be shared. Survey principals and administrators to understand their perceptions of the process and resulting data.
9. Does the instrument and data sharing process collect the right data to meet multiple needs? (e.g. reporting requirements, classroom instruction, assessment of special needs)	Plan a targeted survey or interview process with Phase 1 participants that are 'expert' in each area. Ask them to identify strengths, redundancies, and gaps.
10. What aspects of implementation can be improved?	Use data from 1-8 to develop recommendations for Year 2.
11. What aspects of the instrument itself may need attention?	Consider information from 1-8 to guide recommendations for Year 2.

Phase 2 - Assumes continued participation of Phase 1 participants, plus additional classrooms and students across the state. Participation will include some *Pre-K sites*. Assumes ability to track data longitudinally at the individual child level.

QUESTION	DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY
12. Replicate 1-11 as appropriate.	Where possible show change or development between years 1 and 2.
13. Did use of TSG improve efficiency related to: a) assessment administration; b) data management; c) understanding classroom needs; d) information sharing with parents, other teachers, other schools, other providers; e) costs? Consider change between years 1 and 2 administration, as well as prior to implementation (2012).	Compare metrics on time spent on training, assessment, data management, classroom planning, planning for conferences, etc. as available. Validate / explore results with focus groups targeting teachers. Revisit needs assessment as 'baseline' – concerns and questions that existed prior to implementation.
14. Did the training offer additional benefits related to peer interaction and learning? What can/should be done to further promote?	Integrate question into training survey, and, include a related question in focus groups with teachers.
15. How does this data relate to other assessment data?	Select one or more additional data sets (e.g. assessment data that take place before K / after K (grades 1-3)) and describe relationship of data. (Begin work to understand concurrent validity).

C. TEACHING STRATEGIES GOLD™ – OBJECTIVES

Social–Emotional

1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors
    a. Manages feelings
    b. Follows limits and expectations
    c. Takes care of own needs appropriately
2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships
    a. Forms relationships with adults
    b. Responds to emotional cues
    c. Interacts with peers
    d. Makes friends
3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations
    a. Balances needs and rights of self and others
    b. Solves social problems

Physical

4. Demonstrates traveling skills
5. Demonstrates balancing skills
6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills
7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination
    a. Uses fingers and hands
    b. Uses writing and drawing tools

Language

8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language
    a. Comprehends language
    b. Follows directions
9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs
    a. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary
    b. Speaks clearly
    c. Uses conventional grammar
    d. Tells about another time or place
10. Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills
    a. Engages in conversations
    b. Uses social rules of language

Cognitive

11. Demonstrates positive approaches to learning
    a. Attends and engages
    b. Persists
    c. Solves problems
    d. Shows curiosity and motivation
    e. Shows flexibility and inventiveness in thinking
12. Remembers and connects experiences

        a. Recognizes and recalls
        b. Makes connections
13. Uses classification skills
14. Uses symbols and images to represent something not present
        a. Thinks symbolically
        b. Engages in sociodramatic play

Literacy
15. Demonstrates phonological awareness
        a. Notices and discriminates rhyme
        b. Notices and discriminates alliteration
        c. Notices and discriminates smaller and smaller units of sound
16. Demonstrates knowledge of the alphabet
        a. Identifies and names letters
        b. Uses letter–sound knowledge
17. Demonstrates knowledge of print and its uses
        a. Uses and appreciates books
        b. Uses print concepts
18. Comprehends and responds to books and other texts
        a. Interacts during read-alouds and book conversations
        b. Uses emergent reading skills
        c. Retells stories
19. Demonstrates emergent writing skills
        a. Writes name
        b. Writes to convey meaning

Mathematics
20. Uses number concepts and operations
        a. Counts
        b. Quantifies
        c. Connects numerals with their quantities
21. Explores and describes spatial relationships and shapes
        a. Understands spatial relationships
        b. Understands shapes
22. Compares and measures
23. Demonstrates knowledge of patterns

Science and Technology
24. Uses scientific inquiry skills
25. Demonstrates knowledge of the characteristics of living things
26. Demonstrates knowledge of the physical properties of objects and materials
27. Demonstrates knowledge of Earth's environment
28. Uses tools and other technology to perform tasks
Social Studies
29. Demonstrates knowledge about self

30. Shows basic understanding of people and how they live
31. Explores change related to familiar people or places
32. Demonstrates simple geographic knowledge

The Arts
33. Explores the visual arts
34. Explores musical concepts and expression
35. Explores dance and movement concepts
36. Explores drama through actions and language English Language Acquisition
37. Demonstrates progress in listening to and understanding English
38. Demonstrates progress in speaking English

From *Teaching Strategies GOLD® objectives for development & learning: Birth through kindergarten*, by C. Heroman, D.C. Burts, K. Berke, & T.S. Bickart, 2010, Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies, LLC. Copyright 2010 by Teaching Strategies, LLC. *Reprinted with permission.*

D. TEACHING STRATEGIES GOLD™ FOR NEVADA'S KINDERGARTEN ENTRY ASSESSMENT

BACKGROUND

The planning process for a statewide kindergarten entry assessment (KEA) stemmed from the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant (RTT-ELC) Application completed in early 2012. While Nevada was not funded, the Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (NECAC) committed funding to develop plans for two critical components identified in the application: a common statewide KEA and an early childhood data system. The timeline for implementation was targeted for September 2013, allowing remaining American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 dollars to be leveraged for implementation. Social Entrepreneurs, Inc. (SEI) was tasked with completing a needs assessment and developing an implementation plan for Nevada under the direction of the NECAC, managed by the Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office (HSC&ECSO). As part of this needs assessment, SEI was responsible for identifyingan assessment process or tool for Silver State KIDS. After careful analysis, SEI recommended Teaching Strategies GOLD™. This document provides additional rationale related to that final recommendation.

THE PATH TO A RECOMMENDATION

Below are the steps that resulted in a recommendation for Silver State KIDS:

1) Develop a comprehensive needs assessment that defines Nevada's criteria for KEA in alignment with RTT-ELC specifications
2) Validate criteria with stakeholders
3) Identify a list of potential assessments for review, paying special attention to those who are being used by Race to the Top winners and higher scoring RTT-ELC applicants
4) Match available assessments to criteria, and for those that meet these criteria, explore additional assets / benefits
5) Recommend one or more as a finalist for implementation, with an option to recommend "create a new assessment for Nevada," should no assessment meet criteria
6) Solicit feedback on recommendation through KEDS summit, NECAC meeting and other meetings and events

One of the overall goals of Nevada's KIDS project is to select a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) that adds value to each of Nevada's diverse districts and counties. Toward that end, work with individual counties and stakeholders identified the needs, preferences, and barriers of a common KEA. Criteria identified through this process have been summarized in this rating instrument for the purpose of comparing available assessments.

After an initial review of available instruments, four instruments were identified for further inquiry. These were:

- Teaching Strategies GOLD™, or *TSG* (selected for comparison due to its position as the selected KEA for many RTT-ELC participants).
- Northwest Evaluation Association Children's Progress Academic Assessment or *CPAA* (selected for comparison because many counties in Nevada currently use NWEA MAP, and guidance from the planning process directed leveraging existing resources).
- High Scope Child Observation Record or *COR* (selected for comparison because United Way of Southern Nevada TAPPS uses COR effectively and efficiently; this initiative is an example of data sharing among ECE and K-12).
- Pearson's Work Sampling / Work Sampling Online[17] (selected for comparison due to its position as the selected KEA for several RTT-ELC participants).

While each of these instruments showed merit for use in Nevada, only two met the criteria as established for Nevada's Kindergarten Entry Assessment. *Teaching Strategies GOLD™* and *Work Sampling* meet established criteria for KEA; the others may be important options for preschool and schools seeking assessments for different purposes. A comparison of TSG and Work Sampling is provided in this document. It is intended to help guide next steps in planning. Information gathered from other assessments is available upon request.

KEY for Tables (pages 2-6)
For attributes with Y, N, U, or P:
Y = Yes, N = No, P= Partial, U = Unknown.

For attributes with a number assigned, the following scale of 0-3 is used:
0 = no capability; weakness or gap
1 = low rating; little in place to support this need or attribute
2 = partial; some components or support in place but could be stronger
3= asset; this is an area of strength of the assessment

Key Criteria	Teaching Strategies GOLD™		Work Sampling System	
	Rating	Notes	Rating	Notes
Intended for use in kindergarten, with an opportunity to collect entry data (within first 2 months of school year)				
Assesses the domains in Nevada's definition of school readiness				
Aligned with Common Core State Standards (CCSS)				
Aligned with Nevada Pre-K Standards				
Designed to improve instruction				

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[17] **Author(s):** Samuel J. Meisels, EdD, Dorothea B. Marsden, Judy R. Jablon, Aviva B. Dorfman & Margo K. Dichtelmiller

Key Criteria	Teaching Strategies GOLD™		Work Sampling System	
	Rating	Notes	Rating	Notes
Leverages existing systems within Nevada				
Analysis of information collected is straightforward and facilitates the use of data to enhance instruction				
Analysis of information collected is straightforward and facilitates the use of data for program improvement				
Is designed to collect and analyze data at multiple time points or continuously				
Assessment is developmentally appropriate for young children (ages 5 and 6)				
Assessment is culturally appropriate for Nevada's children				
Assessment is linguistically appropriate for Nevada's children				
Assessment is accessible to children with disabilities / special needs.				
Assessment is user-friendly (consider issues such as clear instructions for the teacher or assessor; flexibility in administration, etc.).				
Assessment is family friendly (for example, includes handouts for families that explain the assessment clearly and concisely; has developed literature and recommendations for communicating assessment information with diverse families.)				
Cost Per Child				
Estimated Time Per Child Recommended to Complete the KEA				
Recommended Training Time per Teacher or Assessor				
	Notes		Notes	
What is the primary purpose of this instrument?				
What is the most important benefits? How do users say it adds value?				
What are the technology requirements for its use?				
What other instruments, if any, have been aligned or are compatible with this assessment system?				
What additional data is collected?				
Other Users				
Other assets				
References	Teaching Strategies Home Technical Information: http://www.teachingstrategies.com/content/pageDocs/GOLD-Tech-Summary-8-18-2011.pdf		Pearson Work Sampling Home Technical Information: (summary) http://www.erikson.edu/PageContent/en-us/Documents/AERA-FCD%20WSS%20summary.pdf	

THE RECOMMENDATION

Using this process, two assessments were considered as finalists based on the defined criteria. These were Work Sampling Online and Teaching Strategies GOLD™. From these two finalists, Teaching Strategies GOLD™ was recommended because of its strength in a few critical areas. These are outlined, below.

7) **Streamlined data entry.** Teaching Strategies GOLD™ has advanced features that have been developed to address other states' needs for streamlined data entry.

8) **Extensive reporting options.** Teaching Strategies GOLD™ has extensive reporting capabilities, and organizational infrastructure available to assist Nevada in analyzing and reporting data.

9) **Position as an instrument already in place in Nevada**. Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is used by many in Nevada including Head Start grantees and Clark County School District State Early Childhood / Special Education programs. Leveraging systems in place in Nevada was one of the criteria set forth in the needs assessment.

10) **Proven experience in implementing large-scale, statewide projects**. Roll out of this project across the state in the time scale identified will require considerable infrastructure, knowledge, and expertise. Teaching Strategies GOLD™ has been piloted and implemented in several other states. They are able to offer comprehensive implementation support that leverages learning from these large-scale and complex implementations. Teaching Strategies GOLD™ has been selected for statewide use for this specific purpose (KEA) in six states. These are:

   - Washington
   - Delaware
   - New Jersey
   - Colorado
   - Massachusetts (Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is one of three approved options)
   - Missouri (pilot)
     Hawaii (pilot)

Teaching Strategies GOLD™ has also been used for several statewide pre-K projects, including:

   - Alabama
   - Rhode Island
   - New Hampshire
   - Colorado
   - Washington
   - Oregon
   - Arizona
   - Iowa
   - Nebraska
   - DC

➢ Kentucky
➢ Vermont
➢ Alaska
➢ Military (all branches)

5. **Flexibility to connect with existing data systems**. Teaching Strategies GOLD™ infrastructure can support statewide data and complex collection and reporting requirements. Currently, Nevada is also working to plan a statewide data system that links early childhood data across programs, schools, and among agencies. Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is an asset to the data system because it creates one repository for KEA data, with the opportunity to include participating program serving infants and toddlers, and can provide data to other longitudinal data systems.

6. **Opportunities for "train the trainer," along with checks for reliability**. Teachers need training to use the assessment. Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is one of several assessments that provides opportunities for a "train the trainer" model, but also offers an additional check that can help to ensure (or measure) inter-rater reliability available from any teacher's computer.

PROCESS FOR FEEDBACK

During the needs assessment process, webinars were held. The summit provided an opportunity to convene for further discussion. The NECAC has received information and updates at meetings. In December, they approved the letter of interest for introduction to the office of the Governor, which recommended Teaching Strategies GOLD™. In January, project leadership attended the Nevada Association of School Superintendents. Information about Teaching Strategies GOLD™ was distributed at this time.

STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS

Overall, the responses from stakeholders were positive, with many expressing enthusiasm for statewide data, an assessment fully aligned to the Common Core State Standards, and capabilities of advanced reporting tools. Concerns were also noted. Common concerns are described below:

1) This assessment originated with the Creative Curriculum. There are other early childhood curricula that peer-reviewed studies suggest have stronger outcomes than Creative Curriculum.
2) This assessment is developed by a for-profit company. Nevada should work with non-profits instead.
3) This assessment will take too long to administer.
4) Our organization or preschool has made considerable investments into a different instrument for assessment, and, we feel strongly that it is the best choice.
5) We cannot say whether we approve or not, because we have not used it.

6) There are so many assessments out there; how can we be sure this is best?

Each of these concerns was explored. Please see the following brief responses to these key concerns.

1) This assessment originated with the Creative Curriculum. There are other early childhood curricula that peer-reviewed study suggests have stronger outcomes.

It is recognized that there are other curricula that may be stronger than Creative Curriculum. The Teaching Strategies GOLD™ assessment is designed to work with any developmentally appropriate curriculum, and no recommendation is being made to suggest a specific program. Preschools and organizations are encouraged to select curriculum that is evidence-based.

2) This assessment is developed by a for-profit company. Nevada should work with non-profits and instead.

Teaching Strategies GOLD™ was recommended for its merits. For-profit /non-profit status was not considered as part of the decision criteria (this preference was also not identified during the needs assessment).

3) This assessment will take too long to administer.

This is a legitimate concern, especially for kindergarten teachers with full classrooms and multiple competing priorities. However, this is an issue related to any observational, authentic assessment that takes place in kindergarten. Teaching Strategies GOLD™ showed the most flexibility that made it stand out from other options reviewed, and, its use by several other states for implementation as a KEA positions Nevada to take advantage of recent developments. These Include:
   - ❖ *Teaching Strategies GOLD™ has developed applications and processes to streamline data entry. These include apps for tablets and smartphones.*
   - ❖ *Demographic data can be automated to complete a data set, with existing records matched to student names. This means that teachers do not need to enter extensive demographic or other student information, but, that it can be associated with the child's data as designed by the state with Teaching Strategies GOLD™ during implementation.*
   - ❖ *Some states have determined that they will measure fewer objectives, to reduce the burden on teachers. Teaching Strategies GOLD™ has worked with these states to modify the tool to meet these needs, while also helping to ensure it is valid and reliable for the purposes determined.*

4) It is expensive.

Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is priced competitively at $8.95 for a statewide per/child annual license with a five year contract or $9.25 with a two year contract,

considerably lower than is offered for smaller individual site-based licenses. Savings from leveraging existing licenses, implementation support, and flexibility of the data system were considered in determining value. The assessment is also available to be used at multiple time points throughout the year at no additional cost.

5) Our organization or preschool is using a different tool.

It is understood that preschools may be using different assessment tools and be resistant to change. In the long term, mapping of assessment tools may expand the ability to include multiple assessments in Nevada's emerging data system. In the nearer term, Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is provided as an option for use with children from birth through preschool (with phased statewide implementation in Nevada's kindergartens). It is the intention that some public support may be available to help providers with costs should they choose this option, and that training can be leveraged across the state to the extent that early childhood education (ECE) providers are available to participate. It is understood that ECE programs use diverse tools, and, have different attributes in place that relate to staff ability to collect data, and program capacity to support it.

6) We (as teachers) cannot say whether we like it or not, because we have not used it.

Many states have chosen to pilot multiple assessments, and make a selection after teachers have an opportunity to use more than one tool. While this approach is thorough, it takes considerably more resources and infrastructure to implement. Nevada is accomplishing this planning and implementation under considerable financial restrictions, and managing an aggressive timeline. The recommendation leverages input from multiple sources in Nevada, as well as the learning of several other states that have been working on this process for several years. We make the assumption that this work provides a solid foundation to start from, and, should change be needed, there are opportunities to improve Teaching Strategies GOLD™ or look to other emerging best options.

7) There are so many assessments out there; how can we be sure this is best?

Nevada can evaluate this process, beginning with implementation, to learn from what is working well and what needs to be improved. This approach has the advantage of maintaining momentum, while allowing for self-correction and improvement through time.

E. INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN **SILVER STATE KIDS**

To: Nevada School District Superintendents

From: James Guthrie, Superintendent, Nevada Department of Education

           Michael Willden, Director, Department of Health and Human Services

           Margot Chappel, Director, Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office

Re: Invitation to Submit a Letter of Interest to participate in Phase I of **Silver State KIDS** (Kindergarten Inventory of Development Statewide)

The Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council (NECAC) recently completed a needs assessment and is planning for a statewide kindergarten inventory of development and a supporting data system that coordinates early childhood data with Nevada's K-12 longitudinal data system. **Teaching Strategies GOLD™** (TSG) is the tool that has been recommended for implementation, as it is a valid, reliable observation-based assessment that is aligned to the Common Core State Standards and meets the criteria identified by stakeholders during the needs assessment process. Teaching Strategies Gold can also be used for children birth through kindergarten, enabling school districts and their early childhood partners opportunities to share data.

Funding to launch Phase I implementation of this project in 2013 has been requested as part of the P-16 Council's recommendations to Governor Sandoval. Costs to support each child's assessment portfolio and the necessary training for school personnel are included in this request. A one-shot appropriation for data system projects as identified by the P-16 Advisory Council is contained in the Governor's proposed executive budget, and is subject to legislative approval. In order to implement the project in a timely manner upon legislative approval, the NECAC is soliciting non-binding letters of interest (LOI) from districts for participation in Phase 1. This step is essential to projecting the budgetary needs for implementation of Silver State KIDS. A formal application may be requested once funding is secured and depending on the number of LOIs submitted. Phase I implementation of Silver State KIDS is envisioned to include a limited number of small, medium and large districts that will begin training and assessment in mid- 2013. Requirements for participation in Phase I include:

- All participating teachers must attend two days of training on TSG and Silver State KIDS assessment protocols. Once teachers have attended this one-time training, resources are available online and as needed for ongoing professional development.
- A minimum of 20% of entering kindergarteners in the school district (2013-14 school year) must be assessed using the Silver State KIDS assessment protocols within the first 8 weeks of the school year.
- Contribution to Phase I evaluation activities is expected.
- In-kind support, such as personnel costs related to participation, may be required.
- Time for assessment varies based on a number of factors. Teachers and administrators can consider a range of 1 to 4 hours a week per kindergarten class during the assessment period. More information on time requirements will be provided as it becomes available.

Anticipated benefits of Phase I participation are many, and include:

- Development of a shared understanding regarding what is needed to improve school readiness, beginning in the early years;
- Easy-to-understand graphs and charts to support communication with families about what children know and can do to support learning at home;
- Increased options for assessing growth at multiple points throughout the school year;
- Improved data about each child that can be used to inform planning and instruction;
- Improved information sharing to support program and teacher effectiveness; and
- Smoother transitions for parents, children and schools between Pre-K and kindergarten.

Thank you for considering participation in this very important project to support the longitudinal tracking of learning outcomes of Nevada's children. The data will be used to inform teaching, curriculum planning and decision making at the local level. It will also inform policy making and investment priorities at the state level.

Sincerely,

James Guthrie, Superintendent, Nevada Department of Education

Michael Willden, Director, Department of Health and Human Services

Margot Chappel, Director Head Start Collaboration and Early Childhood Systems Office; Coordinator and Chair, Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council

PARTICIPATION IN SILVER STATE KIDS:

LETTER OF INTEREST (NON-BINDING)

Instructions: Please submit your electronic LOI no later than 5 p.m., **March 18, 2013.** The LOI form can be completed online at http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SSKIDS2012. To send by mail, please complete the form below and send to Social Entrepreneurs, Inc. 6548 South McCarran Blvd., B; Reno, NV 89509. Mailed letters should be postmarked on or before March 1. You will be notified that your letter has been received within 1 business day of its arrival. You are welcome to call or email to confirm receipt. Questions can be directed to: Margot Chappel via email (mchappel@dhhs.nv.gov) or phone (775.688.7453)

District _____

☐ We are interested in participating in Phase 1 of Silver State KIDS, to begin in SY 2013-14. (***Proceed to items 1-6, below***).

☐ We are not ready/able to participate in Phase 1, but would like to be considered for Phase 2 (SY 2014-15) implementation. (***Proceed to items 5 and 6, below***).

☐ We are not interested in participating at this time. (***Proceed to items 5 and 6, below***).

1.   **Estimated Level of Participation:**

		#
a.	Kindergartners expected to participate in Phase 1	
b.	Kindergarten teachers expected to participate Phase 1	
c.	**Silver State KIDS can be used to assess children in preschool. Please estimate the following:**	
	i. Title 1 Pre-K students to be included in Phase 1	
	ii. Nevada State Pre-K students to be included in Phase 1	
	iii. Early Childhood / Special Education Pre-K students to be included in Phase 1	
	iv. Children in Head Start or other community-based early childhood programs to be included in Phase 1	

2.   A Train the Trainer model is planned to maximize Nevada's capacity to implement Silver State KIDS. Trainers will complete online modules and participate in a two-day course that prepares them to train others on the assessment and ensures local expertise in Silver State KIDS. **Is your district interested in nominating one or more educators to participate in the training institute? ☐Yes   ☐ No   If yes, how many?** _____

3.   **Is your district willing to participate in Phase I if funding is not available to support it? ☐Yes   ☐No**

4.   **Briefly describe the existing partnerships and collaboration with early care and education providers in your county.** (If completing this form by paper, please attach a separate sheet).

5. Is your district willing to add a question to kindergarten entry registration forms asking about early childhood environments attended before entering school? ☐Yes ☐No

6. District Point of Contact for SILVER STATE KIDS

Name: _____ Position: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

F. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SILVER STATE KIDS
*(KINDERGARTEN INVENTORY OF DEVELOPMENT STATEWIDE)**

*Previously referred to as KEDS (Kindergarten Entry and Data Systems)

Q. What is Silver State KIDS?

A. Silver State KIDS is envisioned as a process to understand how schools, families, and communities can support young children's transition to kindergarten. A major component of Silver State KIDS is the use of a valid and reliable, observation-based assessment that is completed within the first few weeks of kindergarten to provide information about what entering children know and can do.

Q. Has an assessment tool been identified?

A. Yes. Teaching Strategies GOLD™ is an observation-based assessment that measures multiple domains of learning. It is aligned to the Common Core State Standards. GOLD™ has been designed for this purpose, is currently used by a number of states, and is recommended for Silver State KIDS based on the requirements identified through the statewide needs assessment. Teaching Strategies GOLD™ can be customized for Nevada's use, measuring the objectives of most interest to state educators and administrators.

Q. What is meant by observation-based?

A. Teachers make observations of students over a period of days or weeks, and collect documentation that supports these observations. The information is then entered by the teacher into a data system that allows reporting on the child's knowledge and skills as they relate to specific objectives. This authentic assessment (observation of the child) is developmentally appropriate, gives the teacher valuable information that can be used to shape and inform instruction, and is more likely to capture what a young child can do (compared to other types of standardized testing).

Q. What will our district gain through early participation in Silver State KIDS?

A. Participants will gain actionable data through specific reports developed for teachers, parents, and administrators. Activities are available for teachers to inform instruction and support assessment. The assessment includes a dedicated family portal that strengthens and simplifies communication with families. Schools can determine whether to complete ongoing formative assessments throughout the year, providing information for teachers about how children have progressed.

Q. Who is participating? When do we begin?

A. Silver State KIDS is envisioned as a statewide effort; however, it is intended to be completed in phases. Phasing means that some districts will be early adopters, with training to take place as early as Spring of 2013, depending on funding. These districts will be important in shaping the implementation of Silver State KIDS, and provide feedback to improve the process through participation in evaluation activities. Phase II is envisioned to occur one year later and engage additional districts in Silver State KIDS.

Q. Our district already uses multiple assessments with children in kindergarten. How does this fit with what we are doing?

A. Silver State KIDS is likely to be able to replace some of the assessments you are currently using. Additional support on how districts may consider Silver State KIDS in place of existing assessments is in process.

Q. How does this assessment support dual-language learners?

A. The assessment is fully bilingual, with content for teachers available in both English and Spanish. Many objectives are not language dependent. English language acquisition objectives can be adapted to assess progress in acquiring any second language. A Home Language Survey helps teachers gather information about the language children learn at home and in school. The assessment includes objectives that focus on English language acquisition, and, Spanish language and literacy objectives are also included. Assessing learning in both languages helps to provides a more complete profile of a child's development.

Q. When do we assess?

A. Observations for Silver State KIDS will take place during the first several (4-6) weeks of school using GOLD™ protocols. Completion of data entry is likely to be required by the 8th week of school.

Q. How long does the assessment take?

A. Authentic assessment is different than having a child sit down at a computer or at a desk to take a test. Districts can expect that teachers will need to invest time to observe, document and complete the assessment online; however, many aspects are easily integrated into the teacher's everyday activities. Data entry happens online, and can be completed as documentation is collected or all at once. For teachers that have tablets, a mobile app to streamline documentation is also available.

Time for assessment varies based on a number of factors. Teachers and administrators can consider a range of 1 to 4 hours a week per kindergarten class during the assessment period. Full assessment using GOLD™ in kindergarten measures 38 objectives; some states have chosen to measure fewer. Depending on the number of objectives Nevada chooses for its assessment, the amount of time could vary, and these decisions have not yet been made.

Q. Do teachers and administrators need training?

A. Yes. For Nevada' implementation a Train the Trainer model is envisioned, where trainers participate in a week long institute and are then equipped to provide Nevada teachers with the 2-day training they need on the assessment. Online support and webinars are also available to address questions and teacher turnover. Training on using assessment data is available for administrators.

Q. Is the data reliable?

A. In addition to in-person training on reliability, teachers can complete an inter-rater reliability certification online (from any computer). To accomplish this, ratings of children's developmental levels are compared with the master ratings of GOLD™ developers. Once teachers have reached agreement of at least 90% with master ratings, teachers receive a certificate for achieving reliability.

Q. Is assessment valuable if it is completed only at the beginning of the year?

A. Silver State KIDS completed at the beginning of the year supports statewide data collection and provides information on the skills and knowledge that Nevada's children have when they enter kindergarten. Information from the assessment can be used to inform instruction. The

assessment can also be completed at up to 3 additional time points during the year at no additional costs. This decision-- of whether and when to reassess--can be made at the district or even school / teacher level.

Q. Who completes the assessment? Will our schools need to hire additional staff?

Silver State KIDS needs to be completed by teachers. Only the teacher can complete the assessment online, but aids and other teachers can help to collect the documentation for scoring. This is to protect the reliability and validity of the data. Substitutes and aids are not expected to be needed for assessment; however, teachers will need to be able to devote time at a computer to complete the assessments by the end of the second month of school. Reports are available to teachers immediately after data is entered.

A. Does this assessment align to preschool?

GOLD™ offers assessment birth through kindergarten. The assessment has been aligned to the Nevada Pre-K standards. Many programs already use GOLD™ in preschool. As funding is available new early education and care providers may be invited to participate. Connecting data from preschool to K-12 and beyond is an important long-term goal of Silver State KIDS. Schools can support further alignment, for example, holding transition meetings.

Q. How does this assessment link to Grades 1, 2 and 3?

A. Alignment to the Common Core State Standards and integration into the state data system are the ways in which Silver State KIDS connects to primary grades. Schools can support further alignment, for example, holding transition meetings.

G. NEVADA DEFINITION OF SCHOOL READINESS

A working definition of School Readiness in Nevada

Children's readiness for school is made up of multiple components and shaped by numerous factors. Improving school readiness, therefore, must address children's development of skills and behaviors as well as the environments in which they spend their time. Early childhood leaders at the state and national level agree that efforts to improve school readiness must address three interrelated components:

- Children's readiness for school.
- School's readiness for children.
- The capacity of families and communities to provide developmental opportunities for young children.

Ultimately the goal is that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children.

School readiness is an ongoing process from the moment of birth, to prekindergarten, and through the transition into elementary school and beyond. It is the foundation defined by the intersection of two critical components: 1) children's condition to learn based on the five identified domains of learning, and 2) the school's capacity to meet the needs of all children to prepare them for future school success and the 21st century. This includes, but not limited to providing access to high quality services for all children including aligned standards and curriculum, supportive relationships, engaging environment, smooth transitions and strong family and community connections. [18]

There is consensus, based upon a wealth of research, that a child's readiness for school should be measured and addressed across five distinct but connected domains: [19]

Physical Development and Health--This domain covers such factors as health status,

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[18] Nevada working definition from bill draft request

[19] Based on findings from the National School Readiness Indicators Initiative: A 17-State Partnership and reviewed and revised at the Nevada School Readiness Summit, 2012.

growth, and disabilities; physical abilities, such as gross and fine motor skills; and conditions before, at, and after birth.

Social and Emotional Development--This domain combines two interrelated components affecting children's behavioral health and learning. Social development refers to children's ability to interact with others and their capacity for self-regulation. Emotional development includes children's perceptions of themselves, their abilities to understand the feelings of other people, and their ability to interpret and express their own feelings.

Approaches to Learning--This domain refers to children's inclination to use skills and knowledge. Key components include enthusiasm, curiosity, and persistence on tasks.

Language and Early Literacy Development--This domain includes communication and emergent literacy. Communication includes listening, speaking, and vocabulary. Emergent literacy includes print awareness, story sense, early writing, and the connection of letters to sounds.

Cognition and General Knowledge--This domain refers to thinking and problem-solving as well as knowledge about particular objects and the way the world works. Mathematical knowledge, abstract thought, and imagination are included.

The National School Readiness Indicators Initiative, "Making Progress for Young Children," a multi-state initiative involving 17 states, developed sets of indicators at the state level to track results for children from birth through age 8. Teams also agreed on a core set of common indicators that had emerged from their efforts. Indicators were organized around components which, taken together, shape the extent to which children are prepared for school. The framework for the "Ready Child Equation" appears below: [20]

> ➢ READY FAMILIES + READY COMMUNITIES + READY SERVICES + READY SCHOOLS = CHILDREN READY FOR SCHOOL.

Nevada's framework revised the equation as follows:

> ➢ **READY FAMILIES +READY EDUCATORS + READY SCHOOLS + READY COMMUNITIES + READY SYSTEMS = CHILDREN ARE READY FOR SCHOOL.**

Each element necessary for the outcome that "Children are Ready for School" is defined as follows:

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[20] Kresslein, J. (2005). School Readiness: What Do We Know?. Public Policy and Practice, 4(2), 1-15.

"Ready Families" have adults who understand they are the most important people in the child's life, understand age appropriate development, and support the child's school readiness. Adults recognize their role as the child's first and most important teacher, providing steady and supportive relationships, ensuring safe and consistent environments, promoting good health, and fostering curiosity, excitement about learning.

"Ready Educators" are skilled teachers, who understand age appropriate development, possess the skills to develop appropriate curriculum based on children's development, recognize, reinforce, and extend children's strengths and who are sensitive to cultural values and

individual differences, including children with special needs.

"Ready Schools" accept all children and provide a seamless transition to a high-quality developmentally appropriate learning environment by engaging families and the whole community. A ready school welcomes all children and their families with opportunities to enhance and build confidence in their skills, knowledge, and abilities. Children in ready schools are led by skilled teachers as defined above.

"Ready Communities" play a crucial part in supporting families in their role as primary stewards of children's readiness. Ready communities, including businesses, faith-based organizations, early childhood service providers, community groups and local governments, work together to support children's school and long term success by providing families affordable access to information, services, high-quality child care, and early learning opportunities.

"Ready Systems" describes the availability, quality, and affordability of proven programs that influence child development and school readiness. It also includes the degree to which public and private agencies promote policies and practices including data collection that enhance access to needed supports, information and tools that help all other components (family, educators, schools and children) be ready for children to be ready for school. [21]

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[21] Bruner, C. and Coperman, A. (2003, March). Measuring children's school readiness: options for developing state baselines and benchmarks. A paper prepared for the State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network, pp. 1-2.