TN Department of **Education**

Application for Voluntary Pre-K Programs 2018-2019

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Good afternoon.

Today we will spend some navigating the 2018-19 Voluntary Pre-K Application.

We have one hour for the webinar. I would like to ask that you hold all questions until the end. As we move through this process, take note of anything that bubbles up for you and your team. I will remain on the line to answer your questions after the webinar ends.

There are a few webinar functions I want to help you become familiar with. At the bottom of your screen, there is a zoom button. When you click on it, your slides will enlarge. I will be muting all of you during the webinar. At the end, we will open up the "raise hand" functions and try to answer each of your questions.

Objectives

- Updates and changes
- Timeline for submission and scoring
- Application structure
- Contents of each section
  - Utilization
  - Program quality
  - Teaching and learning
  - Continuous improvement
- Scoring rubric

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Our goal today is to update you on the Voluntary Pre-K application process for FY'19.

- We will first give you the rationale and input involved in decisions around updates and changes.
- Then, we will discuss the structure of this year's application.
- There are four sections this year. We want to review the contents of each one.
- Finally, we will discuss how the scoring rubric will be used.

Application Updates

Pre-K Quality Act of 2016

- ***Competitive grant based on quality***
- Pre-K and kindergarten student growth portfolios
- Legislative intent added that VPK prepare students for kindergarten
- Alignment between pre-K and K–12 instruction
- ***Office of early learning to develop definition of quality with which programs will comply***

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Based on research regarding program practice, the state legislature passed a pre-K Quality Act focused on quality improvements. As a result of this law, the department has been working to decrease the variability of quality in programs state wide. The application targets two of the requirements of the act.
- The application is competitive. Funding will be determined based on the quality of programs as explained within the application.
- The application also serves as a communication tool. Within the application, we target components of the department's definition of quality.

Because of its alignment to the quality indicators, this is an opportunity for teams completing the application to discuss the contents of the application, and how it can be used to guide professional learning and improve practice.
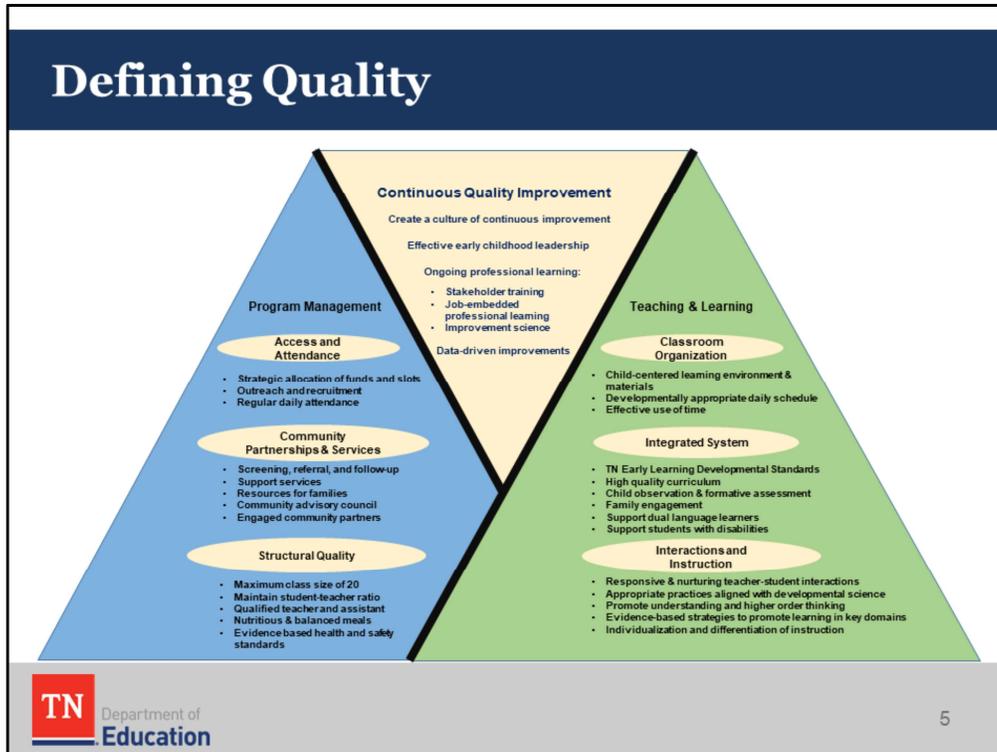
This definition of quality has been shared with VPK directors and Early Learning Model teams already this year. This is the center for our ELM training and guides the all of the content developed within the department. We have explained that the contents outline the components of our definition of quality. Pre-K directors had an opportunity to provide feedback and guide further development of this tool.

We are currently working on a new graphic that is easier to read. However, each section of this graphic will be discussed as we move through this training today.

As you can see, we have defined quality in three ways
1) Continuous Quality Improvement is the core of any quality program. Continuous Quality Improvement focuses on building capacity, improving practices and using data to drive instruction.
2) Program Management explains essentials for basic program quality. This encompasses:
    1) Access and attendance
    2) Community partnerships
    3) Structural Quality
3) Teaching and Learning focuses on:
    1) Classroom Organization
    2) Integrated Systems
    3) Interactions and Instruction

As we move through the application, you will see each of these sections highlighted again.

Application Changes and Updates

The department elicited feedback regarding last year's application process. With this application, we have:

- Shortened the application
- Provided clear questions
- Reduced redundancy
- Provided data from EIS and other systems
- Demonstrated clear connections between questions and rubric scoring

During the planning phases for the 2018-19 application, the department solicited feedback from other state leaders, grant analysts and VPK directors who completed the application last year. Some of the overall comments and ideas regarding the 2017-18 process that led to changes within the application include the following:

- Last year's application was found to be thorough and gave opportunities to express program quality.
- Each section of the previous application gave an opportunity to thoroughly respond to the quality indicator.
- However, many felt the application was too long and time consuming.
- Some questions were difficult to understand.
- Some questions were redundant.
- There were areas where the rubric did not seem to match the question.
- There were places where data was difficult to find and/or could be pulled from other sources.

For these reasons, we have adjusted the contents of the application in order to:

- Shorten the application
- Provide clear questions
- Reduce redundancy
- Provide data from EIS and other systems
- Demonstrate clear connections between questions and rubric scoring

Application Structure

- Application window and feedback will be moved to an January-April time frame.
- The application will be completed in ePlan.
- Only those attachments requested in the application will be scored.
- Budget, site locations and teacher licensure sections will be completed once grant awards are extended. These will not be considered in the scoring process.

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This slide contains some general information about the application process. Districts will be provided with an instruction sheet, and any questions that districts submit during and after this webinar will be compiled into an FAQ to guide the process. These documents will be made available at the beginning of the application window.

Applications will be scored through the same process as last year. Grant analysts will be hired, carefully trained for fidelity, and scoring will be calibrated. Districts will receive scores and feedback from analysts after grant awards are extended.

Please note the third bullet. Analysts will not be scoring any attachments other than those directly requested within the application. However, all limits on narratives within ePlan will be removed. Responses will no longer be limited to 5,000 characters.

Districts are strongly encouraged to structure responses by using the rubric as guidance. This will help you provide necessary details and limit your responses to what is directly being scored.

Application Timeline

- An electronic copy of applications will be emailed to VPK directors during the week of December 11, 2017.
- Application will be posted on the VPK website during this same week.
- Application changes are currently being made in ePlan. We will notify VPK directors when the platform is available.
- All applications will be due February 14, 2018.
- Notification of award will be made by April 15, 2018.

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5 minute mark (rehearsed and timed) A draft of the application was emailed to VPK directors on December 8, 2017. Prior to this webinar, the same information was emailed to each person registered, and it will soon be posted on the Voluntary pre-K website.

Districts are strongly encouraged to begin looking at the draft and determining which team members may be needed to help with the application process. Though the work cannot be loaded into ePlan until January, the work can begin now. As previously noted, uploading this content should be much easier this year. All character limits in ePlan have been removed.

All final applications must be submitted on or before February 14, 2018. For the 6 weeks following the submission, analysts will be working diligently to score and provide feedback. Notification of award will be delivered to districts by April 15, 2018.

Application Sections and Weights

- Utilization – 25%
- Program Management – 20%
- Teaching and Learning – 35%
- Continuous Improvement – 20%

The application is comprised of four sections. Though each question will be scored separately, each section will be averaged and weighted as seen here. We will now spend some time going through each section individually.
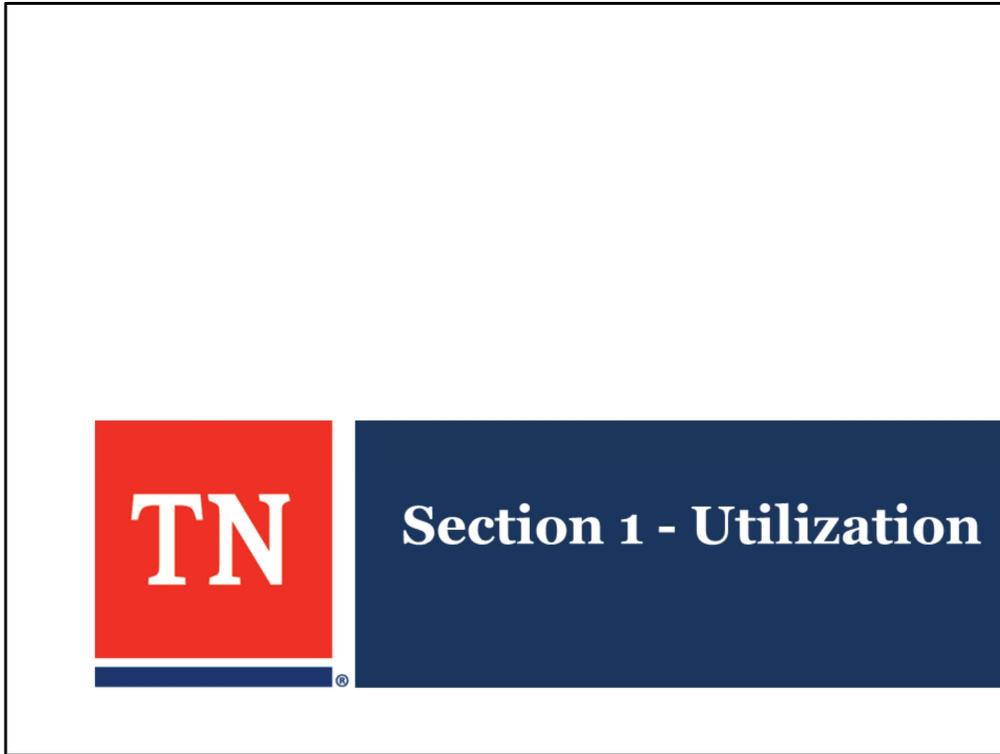
(6:05)
The first section is utilization. This year, the utilization rates are embedded into the application. They will be populated from EIS and uploaded into ePlan.

Utilization Rates – 25%

Section 1 will be uploaded into ePlan.
- Data will be pulled from EIS.
- Three years of data will be included.
- All numbers must be correct in EIS by December 15.
- The final pull will be made on December 18, 2017.
- Utilization rates are determined by the number of **low income four year olds served.**

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Utilization and Capacity rates will both be considered. These terms are defined as follows.

Utilization – This reflects the number of low-income four-year-old students enrolled in VPK seats.

Capacity – This reflects the number of students enrolled in the program regardless of age or income eligibility.

Here is an example of how these rates are calculated.

District A has been awarded 5 classrooms.

- Since classrooms supply seats for 20 students, 5 classes will provide 100 seats.
- If 95 of those seats are full, the district is sitting at 95% capacity.
- However, if only 70 of those 95 students are low income four year olds, the district utilization rate is 70 %.
- Any student served who is not an income eligible four year old will not be considered in your utilization numbers.
- The VPK Scope of services indicates you will be at 95% capacity for the majority of the year. While we encourage you to do everything you can to fill seats with low income four year olds, seats should be filled with the next eligible child by the 20th day of school.

- Since October1, the department has been communicating directly with voluntary pre-K

directors regarding utilization rates. Each of these directors has been asked to confirm utilization rates.

- On December 6, formal communication was sent to VPK directors to provide this information again.
- Districts have until December 15, 2017 to correct any data in EIS. There will be a formal data pull on December 18. All information will be uploaded into ePlan on that date.

If you need further help in explaining your district's untilization rates, I'm happy to talk with you over the phone before December 15th.

Section 2 – Program Management
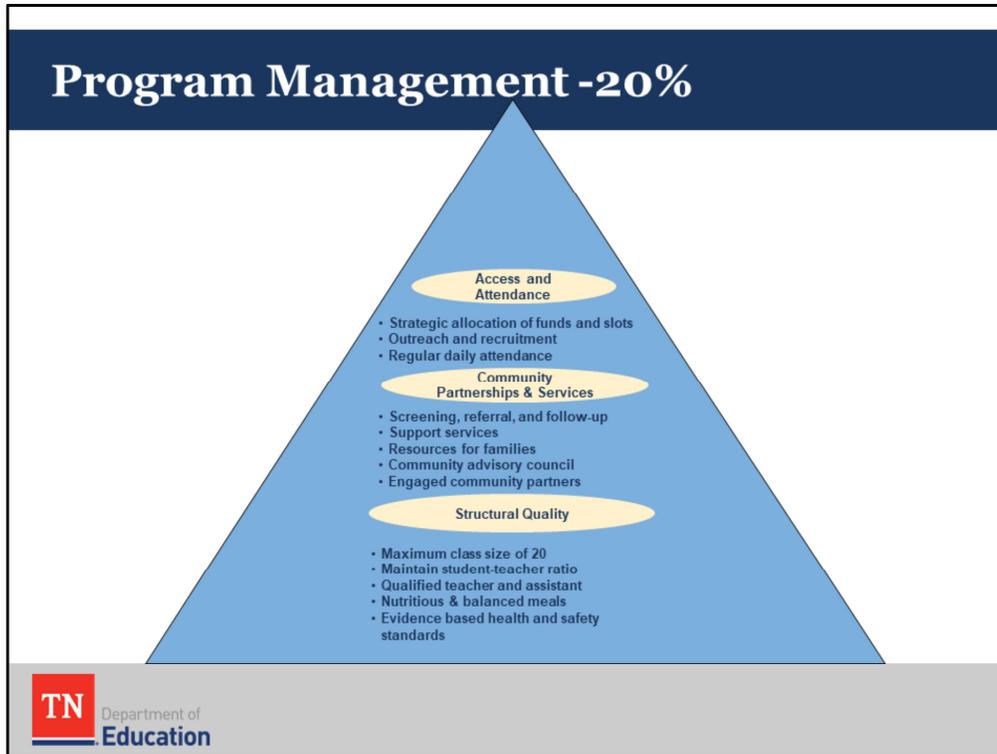
What you can see here are components of program management. These components are basic requirements for rules and regulations. It is the management of your program. The VPK convening and ELM phase 2 were two training events which discussed elements of program management. We will continue this work throughout the year.

Access and Attendance: This component focuses on the intended audience of the grant. We have asked districts to focus on outreach and recruitment in order to ensure access to the targeted population. We have also asked districts to create policies regarding pre-K attendance. These policies should help increase average daily attendance rates.

Community Partnerships & Services: The community partnerships and services component focuses on services, screenings and supports for students and families. This component encourages community partnerships that support the pre-K practices.

Structural Quality: Structural quality is ensured through the adoption of state law, early childhood policy, and rules and regulations that provide specific details for health and safety standard compliance.

Included in this Section

This section comprised of questions regarding these three components:

1. Access and Attendance
2. Community Partnerships and Services
3. Structural Quality

Aligned with program management quality indicators, this section is comprised of questions regarding access and attendance, community partnerships and services, and structural quality. At the end of this section discussion, we will look at part of the application rubric that will be used to score this section. The rubric should be reviewed and used to guide your responses to application questions.

Unlike last year's application, each question within this application will be scored individually. However, the overall section "program management" will averaged and weighted as 20% of your total application score. Let me repeat that once more (repeat).

Access and Attendance

This component is comprised of 5 questions on the following topics.

- Identification of Need
- Recruitment
- Eligibility Determination and Applicant Prioritization
- Enrollment and Eligibility Challenges
- Attendance

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Last year's entire "enrollment" section has been reduced and combined into 5 questions pertaining to the topics shown here on the slide. We will be using EIS for most of our data sets. These five questions request a narrative response to each of the topics.

Let's take a look at a few of these questions and see how they have changed.

Identification of need

2017 Version	2018 Version
• Census chart • Pre-K Program Chart • Blending Funding • Enrollment Data • Two Narrative Questions	One narrative question: Provide information regarding your district's need for quality pre-K programs. Consider the following: • Demographic and/or geographic shifts • Poverty trends • Information regarding the unmet need for quality child care programs (public or private) • Whether your sites are situated in locations that serve the most eligible children • Any other factor(s) that may impact enrollment

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(9:45) This is an example of how we have combined multiple tasks into one "identification of need" question.

Last year, we asked you for population data, funding sources, enrollment trends, etc. There were three charts and three questions we asked you to complete to demonstrate need. We heard that this data was hard to find and that some of the questions did not apply to districts. For example, not all districts blended multiple funding sources.

This year, we have reduced that work for districts. We have compiled all of the work into one question. While the question mimics one that was on last year's application, it is not exactly the same.

Remember, for each question, applicants should read the question and the corresponding rubric carefully before deciding what information needs to be included. Try to provide details and examples to support your concise statements.

Recruitment

2017 version	2018 version
1) Describe your district's pre-K registration process, including how registration is publicized and how your district recruits eligible students.	Describe your district's pre-K registration process. Please include responses to the following questions: • How is registration publicized to the community? • How does your district recruit and enroll eligible students? • How do you know your current processes are effective?

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Another change has been the insertion of guiding questions throughout the application.

Last year's enrollment section was comprised of 7 questions. One of these questions asked about recruitment. Application feedback expressed a great deal of concern regarding the alignment between the application and the scoring rubric. By providing guiding questions, this version of the application makes an attempt to clarify the connections and to help districts be more successful in providing complete responses. The rubric has been designed to score each question individually. Our hope is that this will help you highlight the strong practices the grant analyst will be looking for.

Here is an example of a question that not only provides guiding supports, but also requests additional documentation. The purpose of this question is to determine how you are screening and prioritizing students. This last bullet asks for an attachment. Applicants are asked to attach a copy of the student application used to determine enrollment eligibility. This will be uploaded into ePlan and will be considered when scoring this question. Please be reminded, documents attached to the application in ePlan will not be considered for scoring, except where they are requested.

Community Partnerships and Services

This component is comprised of two questions on the following topics:

- Family Resources
- Community Pre-K Advisory Council

The Community Partnerships and Services component asks districts to discuss best practices related to family resources and Community Pre-K Advisory Council participation. Both of these questions were on last year's application; however, this year the application provides a few more guiding questions with the intent to look closely at how districts help children with the pre-K to Kindergarten transition. To maximize your scoring opportunities, be sure to use the rubric to guide your responses.

Structural Quality

This component is comprised of two questions on the following topics:

- Teacher Qualifications
- Safety and Health

The structural quality component asks two questions related to teacher qualifications and health and safety. While both of these are monitored by School-Based Support Services, and the law is clear about expectations, districts will be asked to elaborate on their monitoring of these components.

Safety and Health

2017 Version	2018 Version
Describe the roles and responsibilities of administrative staff responsible for the successful implementation of the VPK program. Include their education credentials and job responsibilities in and out of the VPK program. Include the following: • Staff responsible for VPK program administration • Staff responsible for insuring inclusion opportunities are present • Staff responsible for new classroom observations using ECERS and ELLCO • Staff responsible for conducting classroom teacher evaluation. • …	Please describe how your district monitors programs for the following: • Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) • Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) • Compliance with Rules and Regulations • Compliance with Scope of Services Include the ways in which feedback is provided and the procedure for following up when a plan is created and when corrective action is needed. .

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This section on Safety and Health was one that needed refinement. You can see a stark difference between the 2017 question and the 2018 question. Last year's responses were varied, and the question did not guide districts to express quality practices. With this revision, notice that districts are being asked to respond to program monitoring and the processes used to monitor. I'm going to pause here so you can look at the comparison between these two questions. Jot down some differences you notice, and some areas where these questions overlap.

Using the Scoring Rubric

II.d. Enrollment and Eligibility Challenges

Please explain any challenges you have had in meeting eligibility requirements and how you have worked to overcome those challenges. *(Please note: 90 percent of children served should be income-eligible four-year-olds.)*

4	3	2	1	0
Response provides a detailed description about how the district addresses challenges of eligibility requirements or plans to maintain eligibility requirements including: ○ A clear understanding and description of multiple issues and roadblocks that interfere with enrollment ○ A detailed plan for overcoming those challenges ○ A few ways additional seats could be used to meet the need if available and/or wanted (if program is fully utilized)- OR - ○ Response describes multiple ways how the district plans to maintain/continue to place eligible children in seats.	Response provides adequate detail about how the district addresses challenges of eligibility requirements or plans to maintain eligibility requirements including: ○ An understanding and description of issues and roadblocks that interfere with enrollment ○ An outline of a plan for overcoming the challenges If program is fully utilized, response indicates a beginning plan on how additional seats could be used to meet the need if available and/or wanted - OR - response describes how district plans to maintain/continue to place eligible children in seats.	Response provides general information about how the district addresses challenges of eligibility requirements or plans to maintain eligibility requirements including: ○ A description of some issues and roadblocks that may interfere with enrollment. ○ Some ideas of how to overcome challenges ○ If program is fully utilized, response indicates some ideas how additional seats could be used to meet the need if available and/or wanted - OR - Response describes general ideas on how to maintain/continue to place eligible children in seats.	Response is vague or limited about how the district addresses challenges of eligibility requirements or maintain eligibility requirements including: ○ Identifying very few issues or roadblocks, or issues are noted, but not specific ○ An idea to overcome challenges ○ If program is fully utilized, brief ideas/suggestions on how to maintain seats or add seats	Response does not address challenges of meeting eligibility requirements. -OR- Response does not indicate a plan for overcoming the eligibility requirement challenges. -OR- Response gives no indication for how the district plans to maintain/continue to place eligible children in seats.

Comments:

Score

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(13 minutes)
Here is your first look at the new scoring rubric. Because it is important for you to use this tool to guide your responses, I want to take a moment to talk you through the parts of the rubric, and demonstrate how I might use this rubric if I was responding to the question related to enrollment and eligibility requirements.

First, notice that the rubric has the question above the scoring scale. This will help you and the analysts when aligning the application to the scores. You will also notice that score ranges for each section range from 0-4. A level zero would indicate that the indicators were not addressed at all, or that there are some major components missing from the response. In contrast, a level 4 would be considered an exemplary response. This is a response that cites multiple sources of evidence and strong explanations and plans where practices may be in the beginning stages. In fact, you may find that the indicators within this rubric will spark a conversation among your team members to use these indicators to guide your program goals.
Once each section is individually scored, those scores will be averaged and weighted to determine a section score. Be sure to read each part of the rubric.

Let me show you the thought process I might use when connecting the application question with the rubric to construct a response.

In this example, the question asks me what challenges we have in meeting enrollment and eligibility requirements, and how our district has worked to overcome those challenges.

The first thing I'm going to look at is what is included in a level 4 response.

CLICK 1 – Here I see that the rubric is asking if I clearly understand what my roadblocks are.

I know that this year we have all seats filled with low income four year olds, except at Cook elementary where we have struggled to fill 5 seats. That classroom is difficult to fill because of the location; however, if we move the class closer to a central location, the students in this rural area will not have opportunities to attend. I also know that my other three sites have a waiting list, but none of the waiting lists are long enough to fill the class there either.

CLICK 2 – Here the rubric asks me for a detailed plan to overcome these challenges.

The director and I have looked at this utilization many times. We do not currently have a plan, but we have some ideas for providing transportation for students. Perhaps we will begin to pilot bus transportation for pre-K in this area only. We could also look at transporting students from another school to this one. The waiting list has about 5 students on it, so that would fill those seats.

CLICK 3- These two things are an either/or situation. If my programs are fully utilized I *either* have to give a description for how I will use more seats OR discuss how we will maintain our current levels.
We are not fully utilized, so my response needs to include what my roadblocks are, what we are considering, and our plan for increasing utilization.

<u>I know that the rubric is asking me to identify and problem solve any issues I have with utilization.</u>
My response could look like this:

Here in Estes County, we have VPK seats for 100 children. 85 of those seats are filled with low income four year olds. We have recruited through multiple methods: Online, newspapers, kindergarten registration and Health Departments; however, we have not been able to fill those 15 seats with low income four year olds. I have 10 students on waiting lists at other schools. This is not enough to consider moving the site. The location of this site is important to ensure our outlying rural communities have equal access to the program. Our plan is to conduct a community survey. We will do this in partnership with Department of Health and the two pediatrician's offices in our district. The survey will be given to all children going for kindergarten physicals. Those offices have agreed to collect this data for us, as long as we do not violate HIPPA laws and the information remains anonymous. The survey will ask 1) Which school district do you live in 2) Did you know about the public pre-K classes, 3) Did your child attend one of those classes 4) Why/why not.
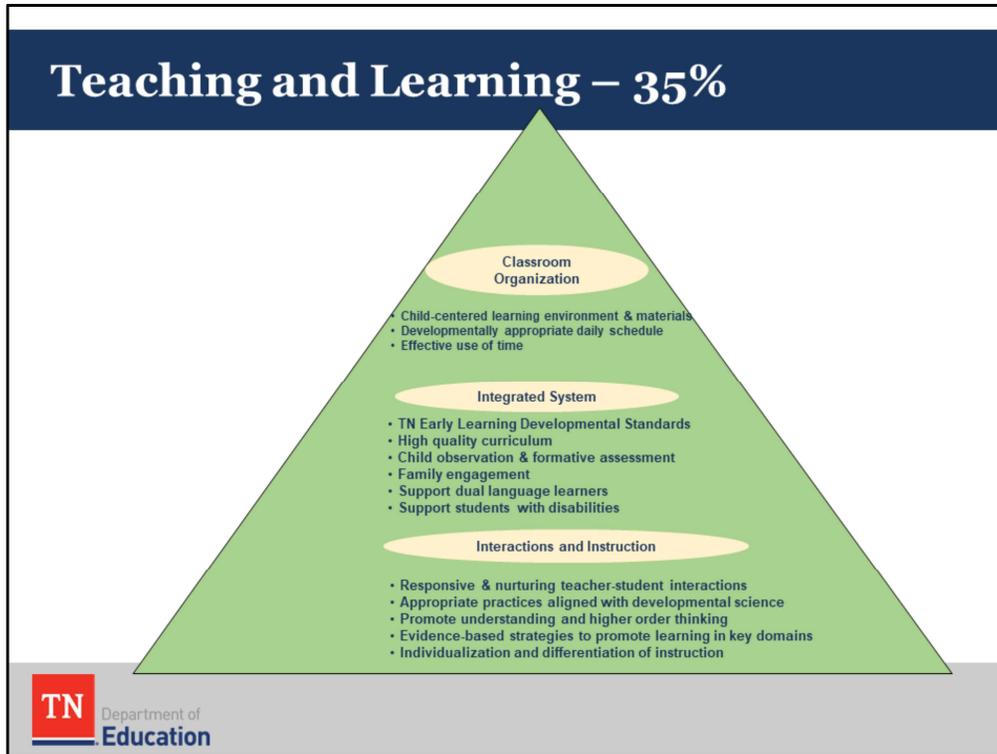
This data gathering will allow us to generate a plan for serving the maximum number of students. Until this data is gathered, we cannot address a plan. However, ideas we have considered are: 1) Provide transportation in the rural area 2) transport waiting list

students to a different location if it is within 20 minutes, 3) Look at site locations after pre-registration to see if we should consider a different option.

(17 minutes)

The third section of the application covers the teaching and learning indicators. Again, you will see some overlaps with last year's application, but you will also notice some new questions aligned to trainings that have been provided by the state.

Teaching and Learning – 35%

Classroom Organization
- Child-centered learning environment & materials
- Developmentally appropriate daily schedule
- Effective use of time

Integrated System
- TN Early Learning Developmental Standards
- High quality curriculum
- Child observation & formative assessment
- Family engagement
- Support dual language learners
- Support students with disabilities

Interactions and Instruction
- Responsive & nurturing teacher-student interactions
- Appropriate practices aligned with developmental science
- Promote understanding and higher order thinking
- Evidence-based strategies to promote learning in key domains
- Individualization and differentiation of instruction

The teaching and learning component will weigh in as 35% of your total score.

What you see here are components of quality teaching and learning. These components are essential for instructional excellence in early childhood. These include many of the evidence-based, best practices that have been discussed in the trainings this year. Your guidance on Academically Rigorous, Developmentally Appropriate Practices from ELM Phase II and the VPK convening, will help you answer this section of the application.

Classroom Organization: includes an intentional focus on environmental structures, and information regarding how students and teachers spend their time during the day.
Integrated System: includes ways in which the TN ELDS, Curriculum, Child Observations, and differentiated supports are integrated to provide quality learning experiences for all children.
Interactions and Instruction: includes the ways in which students and teachers interact to ensure those quality experiences.

The questions in this section are aligned to the Teaching and Learning side of the quality graphic.

Classroom organization asks districts to provide narratives regarding the intentional structures around how environments facilitate learning, and how teachers and students spend their time during the day.

The integrated systems section will ask about curriculum implementation, TN ELDS alignment, and services for special populations.

Within interactions and instruction, the application will ask about some ways in which VPK programs are intentionally responsive to student needs.

Classroom Organization

There are three questions in this component pertaining to these topics:

- Child Centered Environment
- Developmentally Appropriate Schedule
- Effective Use of Time

The classroom organization component asks three questions pertaining to these topics:
Child centered environment
Developmentally Appropriate Schedule, and Effective Use of Time

Child Centered Environment

Explain what is considered in the development of a classroom environment and how students interact with environment to facilitate learning.

This question on child centered environments is intended to align with training given during the VPK convening and ELM phase II. We discussed intentionality in environmental design. You should ask yourself the following questions:

How do resources/materials in the environment facilitate learning?
How are resources/materials chosen and changed throughout the year?
How do students access those resources/materials within the classroom?

For supports with this question, you have your Developmentally Appropriate Practices book, and your ELM presentation slides. Be sure to work with teams of teachers to find the most accurate responses to how environments are designed.

Developmentally Appropriate Schedule

We have combined several charts and questions into one:

Please describe your daily schedule including how much time is spent in each activity. Include any efforts you have made to either decrease transitions or include instruction in your transitions.

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The question regarding daily schedule looks different from last year. We are hoping to move away from the more rigid outline of a daily schedule. We would like to see a break down of how children spend their time. For example, rather than indicating that students are in centers from 9:00-11:00, you will state that students are in centers for 120 minutes.
You should also provide a narrative regarding ways in which you seek to reduce loss of instruction during transitions and how the schedule is developmentally appropriate.

Effective use of Time

Based on daily schedule, please explain the purpose of each activity in the schedule and how instruction is delivered during those times. (If Applicable)

This question asks you to tell us what children are doing during the time blocks expressed in the schedule. For example: within whole group, are they participating in interactive read alouds? What is the purpose for those time blocks?

Integrated Systems

This component is comprised of four questions on the following topics:

- Standards Alignment
- Curriculum
- Child Assessment and Observation
- Special Populations

(20:03) The integrated systems component asks four questions which are intended to gather information regarding how instructional tools and systems are used to support differentiated learning.

Standards and Curriculum

2017 Version	2018 Version
1) Curriculum crosswalk 2) Table regarding curriculum titles 3) Narrative description for how curricula are used. 4) Supports provided.	Two questions: 1) Please discuss how you ensure classroom instruction is aligned to the developmental domains found in the Tennessee Early Learning and Developmental Standards (TN ELDS). 2) Please describe how your district ensures that *teachers and teacher assistants* have the supports necessary for effective curriculum implementation.

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Standards and curriculum questions have changed significantly.

This year, this section has been reduced to two questions. While still important, we know there are a great deal of transitions occurring and trainings needed in the coming year. Here, you see the two questions asked in the application. You will want to provide details regarding the ways in which standards are addressed, and the supports teachers and assistants will have in implementing curriculum.

Please note the addition of teacher assistants in the question regarding curriculum. A highly effective classroom utilizes teachers and assistants in support of student learning. By training assistants to use the instructional tools, we empower them to engage in content conversations with students.

Child Assessment and Observation

We have combined tables and narratives into one question:

- List and describe how pre-K data is collected, reviewed and used to inform practice.

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In this past application, there were tables asking what assessments are utilized, and how they are being used. For this application, all of those questions have been combined into one. The following guiding questions should be used to support the response required.

Consider the following:
How is data collected?
Who uses the data?
How often is data reviewed?
How is data used to guide instruction?

Special Populations

Special needs students and dual language learners should be offered the same access to VPK as all other students.

- The grant is intended to serve income eligible four year olds regardless of their learning needs.
- Students from these subgroups should be offered the opportunity to apply for VPK.
- Special circumstances alone to not guarantee access to the program.

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This slide read as is

Special Populations Question

Provide specific information, plans or strategies that you have used and/or plan to use to effectively serve children with special needs and/or non-English speaking, dual language speaking, (DLL) children and families.

This question asks you to elaborate on inclusion practices and supports in place for unique learners.

Interactions and Instruction

Within this component, there are two questions related to the following topics:

- Responsive-Nurturing Student/Teacher Interactions
- Academically Rigorous, Developmentally Appropriate Practices

This component is requesting responses to two questions. The first centers on interactions, and the second on how instruction is delivered.

Responsive-Nurturing Student/Teacher Interactions

Describe your district's policies and practices to encourage healthy social and personal competencies for your pre-K students. Include the following:

- Training for teachers and educational assistants on how to create responsive and nurturing learning environments for young children. Include specifics on any particular training received (i.e., Pyramid Model or Restorative Practices training)
- Example(s) of best practice(s) your programs have used to promote positive school culture and strengthen positive connections among students and between students and adults
- Descriptions of your district's practices regarding students with persistent or extreme behavior issues

Please include your pre-K discipline policy in the space below

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This is the question regarding student/teacher interactions.

Again, several questions have been combined and guidance is provided with the question.

We are looking for responses that include:
Teacher training
Expectations for promoting school culture
Expectations and Interventions provided for behavior needs.

You see the last line asks you to copy and paste, not attach, your discipline policy. This should include your pre-K expulsion and suspension plan.

Academically Rigorous DAP

Please discuss how classroom instruction is meeting the expectation of academically rigorous, developmentally appropriate practice.

The following resources have been made available to help with this question:

- VPK convening
- ELM Phase II training
- NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Practices book

Here, you again see correspondence to resources and trainings provided to districts in this past year. While only one question, this gives you an opportunity to discuss how instruction is delivered in your classrooms. There have been two trainings delivered this year that should help with responses to this question. ELM Phase II and the VPK convening both touched on best practices that could help you formulate a response here. You may also want to draw on your DAP book as a resource.

Using the Scoring Rubric

(23:04) When completing the application, the question guides what the analysts will be looking for; however, to get the full picture and determine how best to construct my response, I have to go to the rubric.

I am going to demonstrate how I might approach this question regarding environments by using both the question and the rubric.

In this example, the question asks me to explain the thought process behind constructing our pre-K environments and how that facilitates learning. I am imagining a district who has 55 VPK classrooms. This means I have to think about the walkthrough forms we use and the training and feedback that is provided to teachers. In general, I have to give the overall expectations.

CLICK 1 – I notice that the rubric asks me to give a detailed response about how environments are developed. My concern is that we have only redelivered 1 ELM session on environments. I'm not really sure what the teachers are doing to rotate and choose materials in centers. I will need to include this information in the teacher round table discussion we are having.

CLICK 2 - Here I see that the rubric is clearly asking for multiple examples. For both academic AND developmental needs. When I look down at the rating for a 3, I see that it asks for at least two examples.

Since rating 3 asks for at least 2 examples, I know I want to try to provide more. When considering academic and developmental needs, my thinking is that we are looking for examples of materials that will intentionally cover the developmental domains and are differentiated for instruction. I am reflecting on the example from ELM training. I remember discussion regarding the writing center. First we chose materials that would belong in a writing center. Then, we were given a scenario for a student with unique needs, and we were asked to be sure to include his needs in the center. I think these are the kinds of examples we are looking for. This is definitely a question for which teacher input is needed.

CLICK 3 – Not only does the rubric guide me to look for intentional use of materials, but it asks about how often they are changed.

These two rubric indicators ask us to provide examples for how materials are changed to both meet the differentiated needs of individual children and continue to shift to meet the overall developmental stages of the students in the classroom. From ELM training, I remember discussing how the environment will need to change throughout the year. For example, the writing center materials should start with things that will develop motor skills. Lacing cards, clay and stamps should be replaced by different tools for writing as the year progresses. We also want to keep students interested by engaging them with new and unique materials to motivate learning.

CLICK 4- This indicator asks me how children interact with the environment.
Here, I am thinking about experiential learning. It seems we should explain how children are provided opportunities to explore their environment and work with the materials.

As I approach this question, I will need to have some conversations with the teachers in the district. Perhaps I will ask them each to give me examples of how materials are chosen, how they are differentiated, and how the teachers know to change them throughout the year. I know I will want my response to detail these necessities, yet remain concise. I will have to be intentional about how to structure this response.

My response could look like this:

Here in Estes County, our VPK teachers have been receiving ELM training from the team who attends those state sessions. We have worked on the 12 principles of child development and learning. These principles have helped us remember that learning occurs at different rates for all children, and that learning and development follow sequences. We also know that constructive play is an important vehicle for developing self-regulation and promoting language, cognition, and social competence. We have tried to focus on these three principles to plan environments and instruction. Here are some examples for how we have done this:

Classroom A: The teacher has always arranged her room to include all of the learning centers required through ECERS. She has also used the literacy checklist conducted by her program evaluator to guide where and how to include literacy materials. However, her centers have remained stagnant and materials are added as standards are covered. After this training, this teacher has begun to focus on two centers each month. She has removed materials students are no longer interested in and has provided new materials for exploration. She has particularly focused on the math center where she had a number of counting materials. Students who were engaging were not using the materials to count, but were "playing" with the bears and "building" with the Unifix cubes. This teacher surveyed her math center to see which of the TN ELDS were covered through her materials. She gave thought to what her instructional goals were and to the fact that she had 4 students who could count objects to 100, but two who could not orally count to 10. This teacher completely emptied her math area and provided opportunities for one to one object matching, exploration of 10 frames and objects, and opportunities for subitizing and counting sets of objects. She introduced numerals and began to ask some children to match sets to those numerals, and others were create representations of combining sets through drawings or play.

Classroom B: This teacher has had a long standing practice of rotating materials. When asked about this practice, she indicated that she observes her children in each center. She takes anecdotal notes for our evaluation system and she uses that information to guide what goes in centers. For example, one student was found in the block center building complex structures. She was experimenting with ways to make blocks stand. The teacher said this went on for 3 days, and she noticed some of the same experimenting happening repeatedly. The teacher introduced the child to "blue printing," and asked her to begin to record some of her experiments. This not only encouraged the student to continue doing what she was interested in, but stretched her to include writing and literacy practices. The teacher said sometimes the children don't want to leave a center and explore other areas, so she tries to include those skills that would be missed into areas where the child enjoys the exploration.

Classroom C: This is a new teacher without a lot of experience in pre-K. She is still learning from her peers, through trainings and through her ECERS plans how environments should be organized. We have not yet seen a lot of change of materials. In particular, the children seem interested in materials and there are varied levels of development represented, but there seems to be little alignment to instructional standards. While we recognize this as a need, we have created a plan for this teacher. Our coach has been meeting with this teacher twice a month to discuss her concept units and plans. As they discuss standards, the coach has asked

the teacher to provide three examples for how those standards will be included in the centers. The VPK director does walkthroughs once a month. It is our intention that the director will provide feedback on standards aligned materials seen in various centers. We believe this practice will support and encourage the teacher to begin this practice.
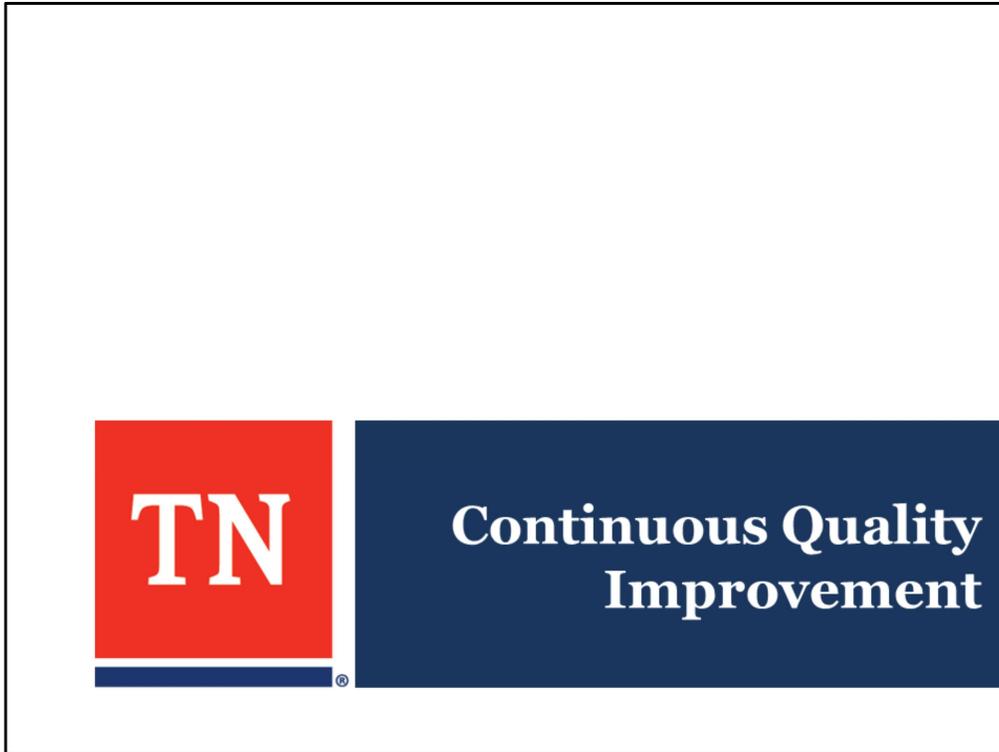
(29:28) The last section of the application is Continuous Quality improvement. This section will weigh in as 20% of the total score.
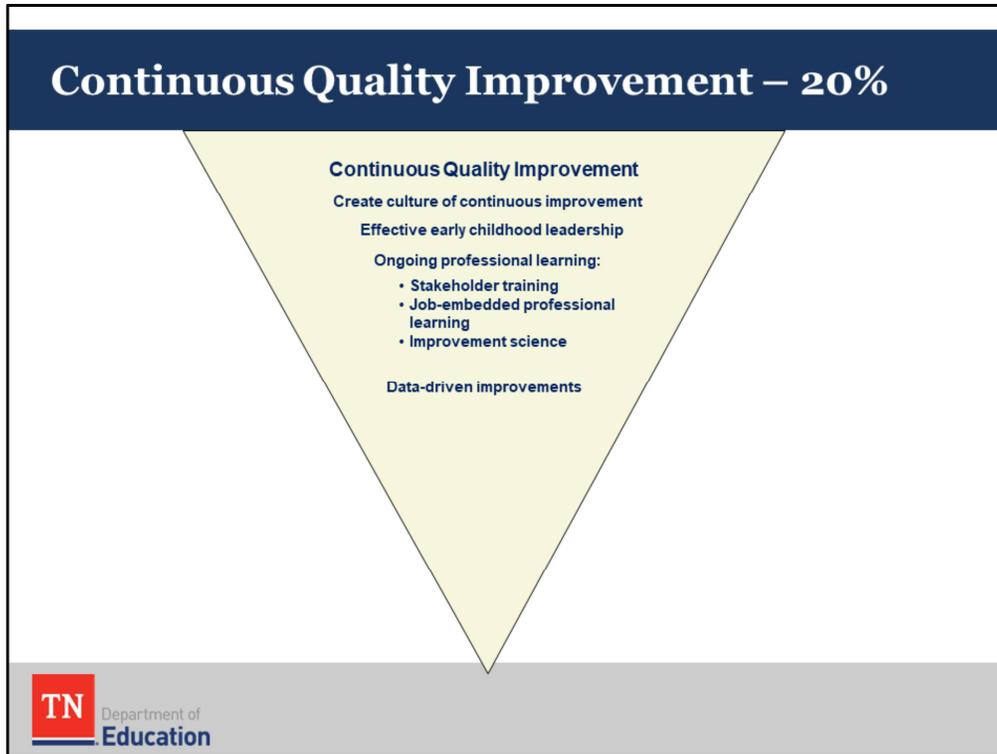
There is no single method for decreasing the variability of quality of VPK programs state wide. Just as every child has unique gifts, talents and needs, our programs do as well. However, there are components of high quality programs for which all programs should strive.

Quality programs use multiple methods of data to improve student outcomes.
Data has the greatest impact if it:
- Has a defined purpose
- Is used to set goals, and
- Is used to improve outcomes.

Programs should minimize multiple assessments that have the potential to disrupt teaching and learning, and should instead focus on specific program priority assessments.

The focus area in your district may shift from year to year. Continuous quality improvement is a focus on continual growth and learning.

The questions in this section are aligned to the Continuous Quality Improvement section of the quality graphic.

This section focuses on these three components:

1.   Culture of Improvement
2.   Professional Learning
3.   Data Driven Improvements

Culture of Improvement

This component is comprised of two questions related to:
- Teacher Evaluation
- Portfolio Implementation

(31:06) Culture of Improvement is comprised of two questions.

These questions ask about how teachers are observed, and how observations guide training to help ensure continuous improvement.

The portfolio question is the same question from last year's application. This question asks districts how training has been redelivered to teachers in your district, and how you will continue to support teachers through various transitions within the portfolio process.

Here is the question regarding professional learning.

Last year, responses to this question focused on compliance trainings and perhaps a pyramid model training. However, the intent is to look at the quality of professional learning, in each district ,that provided is for pre-K teachers and leaders. This year's question provides guidance to help districts articulate a more comprehensive response to this question.

- How did your leadership team redeliver Early Learning Model (ELM) training ?
- How was ongoing professional learning embedded into your daily practice?
- What recent or ongoing trainings were delivered that encouraged quality improvements?
- In what way were school leaders involved in early childhood trainings?
- In what way did your professional learning strategies improve and/or increase collaboration with other teachers and grades?
- What other needs does your district have in ensuring quality professional learning for teachers and assistants?

Data Driven Improvements

This component has two questions:
- Developing Goals
- Identifying SMART Goals

Here are the question topics regarding data driven improvements. These questions ask how goals are developed and looks at the goals you currently have. For this section, the expectation is that you will list goals for the CURRENT 17-18 school year. Because of the early application cycle, it is not expected that districts will have data and information with which to develop new goals; however, in the spirit of continuous improvement, you may list new goals where you have new information.

SMART- Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time Based

These examples were shared at the VPK convening in August:

- Goal 1: By May 2018, 90% of VPK students will score "At Expectation" on pre-K early literacy skills as measured by CPAA.
- Goal 2: 100% of VPK students will show growth on CPAA between August and May measurements.
- These goals correlate with TN ELDS Reading Foundational Skills, Phonological Awareness: RF.PK.2, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, and 2e.

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During the VPK convening, we explained that goals are meant to be written in SMART goal format. This means the should be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time based. This slide provides an exemplar for how ELA goals could meet those requirements.

Notice how they include a component of measurement, speak to the standards alignment and provide a time based expectation. The example shown mentions CPAA. This is just one example of a possible measurement. You are expected to have student outcome goals for ELA, Math, Social/Personal Competencies and Approaches to learning. You should also have one program goal focused on improving program quality as aligned with the quality diagram shown throughout this presentation.

Again, you may use goals from the current (2017-18) school year. Because of the application cycle, this will be accepted. However, if you have new data, feel free to adjust and use goals for next year. We encourage you to determine the goals that will best guide your program practice.

As previously stated, this application may bubble up ideas for your program goals.

Using the rubric

Continuous Quality Improvement – 20%

Section Score

VIII. Culture of Improvement
VIII.a. Teacher Evaluation

Describe how the district uses the evaluation system for professional growth.

4	3	2	1	0
Response provides a detailed description about the district's teacher evaluation system, how teachers are evaluated, how evaluation results are used for teacher's professional growth, and for improving instructional practices including: ○ The use of the evaluation system as a growth model ○ A detailed description of protocol for how the teacher evaluation tool is used to provide feedback to teachers to improve practice ○ Multiple examples that support a plan to build teacher capacity based on evaluation scores ○ Multiple strategies for addressing low-performing teachers and for growing those at or above expectations ○ Indication that teacher evaluation results inform a differentiated system of professional learning opportunities and teacher evaluation trends are considered when professional training decisions are made ○ Indication that teacher assistants are evaluated and are provided opportunities for training aligned to evaluation results ○ Description of how guidance documents provided by the state are used to evaluate pre-K teachers	Response provides adequate detail about the district's teacher evaluation system, how teachers are evaluated, how evaluation results are used for teacher's professional growth, and for improving instructional practices including: ○ The use of evaluation system as rating system and growth model ○ A detailed description of protocol for how the teacher evaluation tool is used to provide feedback to teachers to improve practice ○ Several examples that support a plan to build teacher capacity based on evaluation scores ○ Several strategies for addressing low-performing teachers and for growing those at or above expectations ○ Indication that teacher evaluation trends are considered when professional training decisions are made ○ Indication that teacher assistants are evaluated and provided opportunities for training to build capacity ○ Description of how guidance documents provided by the state are used to evaluate pre-K teachers	Response provides general information about the district's teacher evaluation system, how teachers are evaluated, how evaluation results are used for teacher's professional growth, and for improving instructional practices including: ○ Identification of the evaluation system used ○ How feedback is provided to the teacher ○ Indication that professional learning opportunities are sometimes aligned to teacher evaluation trends ○ An example that supports a plan to build teacher capacity based on evaluation scores ○ A strategy for addressing low-performing teachers and for growing those at or above expectations ○ Indication that teacher assistants are evaluated and provided feedback. ○ Description of how guidance documents provided by the state are used to evaluate some pre-K teachers	Response is vague or limited about the district's teacher evaluation system, how teachers are evaluated, how evaluation results are used for teacher's professional growth, and for improving instructional practices including: ○ Indication that the evaluation system is used as a tool to rate effectiveness only ○ Indication that feedback is provided to the teacher ○ Indication that professional learning opportunities are not aligned to teacher evaluation trends ○ Indication that teacher assistants are evaluated ○ Indication that the guidance documents provided by the state are unknown to the district, but there is an articulated plan to utilize them in the future	Response does not describe use of a teacher evaluation system. -OR- There is no clear tool used to evaluate teacher assistants. -OR- There is no use of state-provided guidance documents for pre-K evaluations or plan to use them.

Comments:

Score:

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(33:00)

I am going to demonstrate how I might approach this question regarding teacher evaluations by using both the question and the rubric.

In this example, the question simply asks for a description of how teacher evaluation systems are used for professional growth. The rubric is much more detailed and provides some guidance regarding how I could approach the response.

CLICK 1 – I notice that the rubric asks me to give a detailed response about how teacher evaluations are used. This tells me to describe how teachers are assessed, how the system is seen as growth model, and how evaluations guide instructional practices.

The rest of these indicators ask me for multiple details regarding:
How evaluations are used as a growth model
How teachers are provided with feedback
How we address both low performing and above expectation teachers
Whether we use evaluations to provide teachers with differentiated professional learning opportunities
How we asses teacher assistants, and
A description of how we use guidance documents to evaluate teachers.

What I also notice is the phrase "multiple examples."

For this question, I need to discuss evaluation processes with some of our school administrators. I will send them a survey.

Here is a response I may give to this question:

Our teachers and teacher assistants are evaluated by site administrators. All administrators have been trained to use the TEAM evaluation tool with reliability. In addition to this training, the district conducted additional professional learning with administrators during a principal's meeting. We shared the TEAM guidance documents for early childhood teachers, provided them video examples of how to use the tool, and had dialogue about using the tool at the school level.

Following a simple survey to site administrators, we have noted that 90% of our principals use this guidance document when observing pre-K teachers. Our survey also provided information regarding feedback and job embedded professional learning. 100% of our principals provide feedback using the TEAM evaluation tool. However, only 80% of principals conduct walkthroughs in pre-K classrooms at least monthly. Of those who conduct monthly walkthrough's, 100% provide written feedback to teachers.

We also noted that 50% of principals within the district provide teachers and assistants with training options aligned to the TEAM evaluation document. However, 50% indicated they do not have knowledge of pre-K specific trainings that are aligned to evaluation findings.

Our district provides a coach to work with our 10 pre-K teachers. This coach spends 20% of her time with pre-K teachers. She conducts walkthroughs, provides instructional feedback and models lessons. This coach works closely with teachers to address any instructional practices she observes as well as those observed during classroom observations. The coach also works with the instructional assistant and teacher collaboratively to ensure continuity of practices.

Her observations using ECERS and ELLCO facilitate learning plans. However, this coach also guides the teachers through reflection after observations are conducted. She works to help teachers through any refinements noted through the evaluation process.

Through coaching, observations and walkthroughs, teachers are provided with feedback and professional growth opportunities. However, the survey conducted with site administrators has provided us with proof of some gaps.

Our next steps will be to provide site administrators with a monthly pre-K newsletter. This newsletter will highlight upcoming training opportunities that are aligned to evaluation outcomes, and are applicable to pre-K teachers. We will also conduct a quick survey each

quarter. This survey will ask principals to reflect on teacher evaluations and indicate topics that may need to be considered when planning our monthly pre-K PLC. The coach will also be utilized more intentionally. When there are individual training needs, the coach will be responsible for providing guidance and support around those topics.

Though we do not have these things in place with 100% fidelity, we have used this application as an opportunity to find gaps and create plan to serve teachers. This will be an area used to develop our program goals.

Next Steps

- Begin work with district teams
- Begin responding within the Word document provided
- Before February 14, 2018, upload responses into ePlan

Today, you have been provided with an overview of the updated application and its scoring rubric. You should begin to work with district teams to gather examples and evidence that will support your responses.

We strongly encourage each Voluntary pre-K director to work with teams of stakeholders to complete the application. This includes your community pre-K Advisory Council.

The application scoring rubric will be released prior to the application window which begins on January 3rd. We encourage all districts to use this rubric when constructing responses.

As we mentioned, all character limits in ePlan have been removed. Feel free to begin work within the Word document that has been provided. All barriers in uploading responses should be eliminated.

The application deadline is February 14, 2014.

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Please feel free to reach out to me directly with any questions or concerns. We will compile an instruction sheet and an FAQ with your questions. These will be shared with VPK directors before the application window opens on January 3, 2018.

(38:05) Please use the textbox seen on your webinar platform to ask any questions you may have at this time.