

California Department of Education

**Report to the Governor, the Legislature, and
the Legislative Analyst's Office:**

California's Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge Grant Report



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**Early Education and Support Division
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May 2014

Description: Legislative Report on Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge Grant

Authority: Item 6110-200-0890, Provision 3 of the Budget Act of 2013

Recipient: The Governor, the Legislature, and the Legislative Analyst's Office

Due Date: May 1, 2014

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Executive Summary

This report is required by Item 6110-200-0890, Provision 3 of the Budget Act of 2013. The California Department of Education (CDE) is required to submit a report to the fiscal committees of the Legislature and the Governor's Administration on the state and local activities undertaken with the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant funds each year.

This report provides an update on the 2013 federal RTT-ELC grant activities in California. The objective of RTT-ELC is to improve the quality of early learning programs and close the achievement gap for children with high needs. RTT-ELC is organized around five key areas of reform: (1) Successful State Systems; (2) High-Quality, Accountable Programs; (3) Promoting Early Learning Development Outcomes for Children; (4) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce; and (5) Measuring Outcomes and Progress.

California was a successful competitor and received a grant of \$75 million over four years (January 2012 through December 2015). California is implementing a unique approach that builds upon local and statewide successes to create sustainable capacity at the local level and address the geographic and cultural diversity of the state. To achieve its ambitious goal, California is using the majority of the funding to support the development and expansion of successful local quality improvement efforts led by a voluntary network of 17 Regional Leadership Consortia (Consortia) in 16 counties that are operating or developing a local Quality Rating and Improvement System or quality improvement system and allocating local resources to the efforts.

In addition, California is using a portion of the RTT-ELC grant funds to make several one-time investments in state capacity via ten projects. These investments support the major RTT-ELC reform areas as well as providing additional resources for the Consortia and the state as a whole. During the four-year grant period, the CDE will be the RTT-ELC lead agency for California.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact Cecelia Fisher-Dahms, Education Administrator, Early Education and Support Division, by phone at 916-324-9739 or by e-mail at cfisher@cde.ca.gov.

You will find this report on the CDE RTT-ELC Legislative Reports Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/rt/rttelclegreports.asp>. If you need a copy of this report, please contact Kimberly Ramos, Office Technician, Early Education and Support Division, by phone at 916-319-0781 or by e-mail at kramos@cde.ca.gov.

California's Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge Grant Report

Introduction

Based on the robust body of research demonstrating that high-quality early learning and development programs can improve young children's health and social, emotional, and cognitive outcomes; enhance school readiness; and help close the wide school readiness gap, the U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services released the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) application on August 23, 2011. A total of 37 RTT-ELC grant applications were submitted and California was one of nine winning states. California requested \$100 million and originally was awarded \$52.6 million. In July 2013, additional federal money was released for a second round of RTT-ELC grants. At that time, California received a supplemental award of \$22.4 million, bringing the total award amount to \$75 million, the largest award of any state. The California Department of Education (CDE) is the RTT-ELC lead agency, and staff members from the Early Education and Support Division (EESD), formerly the Child Development Division, with support from First 5 California (F5CA), serve as the RTT-ELC Implementation Team that provides overall grant administration, project monitoring, technical assistance (TA), and support for the 17 Regional Leadership Consortia (Consortia).

The objective of the RTT-ELC program is to improve the quality of early learning programs and close the achievement gap for children with high needs as defined in the federal application:

Children from birth through kindergarten entry who are from low-income families or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, including children who have disabilities or developmental delays; who are English learners; who reside on "Indian lands" as that term is defined by section 8013(6) of the ESEA; who are migrant, homeless, or in foster care; and other children as identified by the State.

To address this school readiness gap, the grant identified high priorities for both strengthening the quality of early learning and development programs and increasing access to them, especially for children with high needs. The RTT-ELC is organized around five key areas of reform: (1) Successful State Systems; (2) High-Quality, Accountable Programs; (3) Promoting Early Learning Development Outcomes for Children; (4) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce; and (5) Measuring Outcomes and Progress.

California's RTT-ELC grant implements a unique approach that builds upon California's local and statewide successes to create sustainable capacity at the local level to meet the needs of our early learners (from birth to age five) with a focus on those with the highest needs. As directed and approved by the Governor, California's plan supports a locally driven quality improvement process that builds upon existing local and statewide successes and investment while creating sustainable capacity at the local level.

Approximately 77 percent of California's RTT-ELC total grant funding is spent at the local level to support a voluntary network of early learning programs. Each county in the Consortia is led by an established organization already operating or developing a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). The local QRIS model has three common tiers across the Consortia. The federal application defines a tiered QRIS as:

The system through which the State uses a set of progressively higher Program Standards to evaluate the quality of an Early Learning and Development Program and to support program improvement. A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System consists of four components: (a) tiered Program Standards with multiple rating categories that clearly and meaningfully differentiate program quality levels; (b) monitoring to evaluate program quality based on the Program Standards; (c) supports to help programs meet progressively higher standards (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial support); and (d) program quality ratings that are publically available; and includes a process for validating the system.

The Consortia includes 17 members in 16 counties (Alameda, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Merced, Orange, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Ventura, and Yolo). The number of children under five years of age in these counties is approximately 1.9 million, which represents almost 70 percent of the total birth to five children in California.

In addition, California will use a portion of the RTT-ELC grant funds to make several one-time investments in state capacity. The RTT-ELC projects are in four of the five key reform areas and include:

- Reform Area II: High-Quality, Accountable Programs
 - **Regional Leadership Consortia (\$57,566,270)**
Implement a locally driven approach that builds upon current quality improvement efforts and investments, brings together organizations in their regions with the same goal of improving the quality of early learning, and expands their current areas of impact by inviting other programs to join their local QRIS or by reaching out to mentor other communities.
 - **California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Community Care Licensing Division (CCL) Web site (\$1,000,000)**
Enhance the CDSS CCL Web site to include educational and training materials for consumers and child care providers.
 - **Evaluation (\$4,985,325)**
Conduct a validation evaluation of the Consortia's local QRISs and assess the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

- **Assessment Management System (\$1,412,528)**
Ensure each consortium has a comprehensive system for rating and monitoring by providing increased support for assessments, cross-consortia reliability training, and assessors.
- Reform Area III: Promoting Early Learning Development Outcomes for Children
 - **Electronic Training Materials on Existing Content (\$778,661)**
Develop online overviews of the Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations and the Preschool Learning Foundations and their respective Frameworks and of the Environment Rating Scales (ERS).
 - **Screening Tool Training and Distribution (\$773,043)**
Provide “Ages and Stages” screening tools and materials for training to local consortia members for distribution to programs participating in their local QRIS.
 - **California Collaborative for the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (CCSEFEL) (\$3,238,816)**
Create a Web-based overview of the CCSEFEL Teaching Pyramid, build a network of regional CCSEFEL trainers and coaches, and support and expand implementation of the CCSEFEL Teaching Pyramid to fidelity in interested sites in the local consortia.
 - **Home Visiting (\$690,000)**
Provide training to California Department of Public Health’s (CDPH) local California Home Visiting Program (CHVP) staff on implementing the Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) practices and on the “Three R’s of Early Childhood: Relationships, Resilience, and Readiness” (Three R’s) through online modules and webinars.
 - **California Department of Developmental Services (CDDS), Comprehensive System of Personnel Development for Early Start (\$1,000,000)**
Provide coordinated training for early intervention program staff and support implementation of best practices in developmental and health screening at the local level in collaboration with the Consortia.
- Reform Area IV: A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce
 - **Curricula Development for Higher Education (\$750,000)**
Facilitate and coordinate unit-based course alignment for three child development content areas: infant/toddler, children with special needs, and program administration.

- **Program Administration Scale (PAS)/Business Administration Scale (BAS) Training (\$24,000)**
Provide “train-the-trainer” instruction on PAS and BAS tools to Director Mentors and Family Child Care Home Mentors to support administrative TA to centers and family child care homes participating in the local QRISs.
- Reform Area V: Measuring Outcomes and Progress
 - **Connecting Kindergarten Entry Data (\$1,000,000)**
Ensure that kindergarten entry assessment information, namely the Desired Results Developmental Profile—School Readiness (DRDP-SR) results, can be connected to the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS).

The end goal that unites the Consortia and the state’s one-time investment activities is to ensure that children in California have access to high-quality programs so that they thrive in their early learning settings and succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

RTT-ELC Reform Area I: Successful State Systems

As required by the grant, California continues to demonstrate commitment to and investment in services for children, especially those with high needs. The goal is to have coordinated and streamlined services for children from birth to age five focusing on the needs of the whole child and their families. To achieve this goal, California created a governance structure that brought together the appropriate state agencies, local partners, and staff of the lead agency to assure successful administration of the grant.

As the lead agency, the CDE has continued to rely on the Implementation Team, which consists of staff from the EESD and F5CA, to carry out the day-to-day administration of the grant. The Implementation Team leads the overall grant administration and ensures all federal reporting requirements are met, such as monitoring all contracts related to grant projects and updating scopes of work. The largest portion of the team’s work is directed toward supporting the Consortia.

California's five Participating State Agencies (PSAs), CDSS, CDDS, CDPH, F5CA, the State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care (SAC), and the State Board of Education, continued their involvement in the RTT-ELC grant as defined in their scopes of work. As mentioned above, F5CA's RTT-ELC commitment increased this year by having the agency's staff become actively engaged in working on major aspects of the Consortia implementation. The other PSAs made steady progress in meeting their commitments as stated in their scopes of work. The CDSS amended its approach to implement its scope of work and is in the final stages of completing a contract to develop 35 interactive training modules for child care providers, which will commence in early 2014.

California’s SAC also participates in supporting the grant. During 2013, the SAC actively

met in January, May, and September. The SAC is co-chaired by representatives from the CDSS and CDE and has 11 members representing a broad range of state and local agencies and organizations with a stake in the early childhood field, including social services, health and mental health, and higher education. Two of the governor-appointed members are also leaders in the Consortia. The SAC meetings allowed for RTT-ELC updates and provided an opportunity for feedback from the SAC members to RTT-ELC representatives. Maintaining this connection between RTT-ELC and the SAC is of key importance.

As part of the successful state system, California partnered with 17 leading regional organizations that were operating or developing a local QRIS or quality improvement system and utilizing their own resources to participate in this new opportunity for California. The Consortia includes the following:

California County	Administering Agency
Alameda County	First 5 Alameda
Contra Costa County	First 5 Contra Costa
El Dorado County	First 5 El Dorado
Fresno County	Fresno County Office of Education
Los Angeles County	Los Angeles County Office of Child Care
Los Angeles County	Los Angeles Universal Preschool
Merced County	Merced County Office of Education
Orange County	Orange County Office of Education
Sacramento County	Sacramento County Office of Education
San Diego County	First 5 San Diego
San Francisco County	First 5 San Francisco
San Joaquin County	First 5 San Joaquin
Santa Barbara County	First 5 Santa Barbara
Santa Clara County	First 5 Santa Clara
Santa Cruz County	First 5 Santa Cruz
Ventura County	First 5 Ventura
Yolo County	First 5 Yolo

With the supplemental funds awarded in 2013, the Implementation Team developed the policy and methodology for awarding these new funds in consultation and with the approval of the Governor's Office and Administration, specifically the Department of Finance and the State Board of Education. The supplemental funds were approved for use as follows: (1) increased funding to members of the Consortia that agreed to serve a required number of children with high needs as stipulated by the Administration and to reach out to actively mentor neighboring non-RTT-ELC counties; (2) increased funding for the independent evaluation; (3) allocated funding for the Inter-rater Reliability contract; (4) allocated funding to purchase additional developmental screening tools for use by Consortia providers; and (5) established authority for limited-term staff positions within EESD to support RTT-ELC implementation.

With the award of new funds to the Consortia, the Implementation Team established the process to allocate these funds according to the Administration's direction. This entailed developing criteria and guidance for use of these funds; determining each consortium's funding allocations; reviewing and approving the Consortia revised action plans; and distributing revised Grant Award Notifications to the Consortia.

The funding approval also included the hiring of two consultant positions and one support position, all limited-term for the life of the grant, to complement the Implementation Team. The personnel paperwork was prepared and approved to establish these positions. They were advertised at the end of 2013 and will be hired in 2014. In addition, all of the necessary reports and budget information pertaining to the RTT-ELC Supplemental Award were submitted to the appropriate federal agencies.

RTT-ELC Reform Area II: High-Quality, Accountable Programs

As required in the federal application, California seeks to promote school readiness for children with high needs. More specifically, state applicants were directed to build systems that increase the quality of early learning and development programs for children with high needs so they enter kindergarten prepared. The federal application directed that this be accomplished by integrating and aligning resources and policies across PSAs and by designing and implementing a common, statewide, tiered QRIS.

Quality Continuum Framework

California's locally implemented QRIS is based on a Quality Continuum Framework (Framework) that can be used by communities throughout the state. The Framework includes common, research-based elements, tools, and resources grouped into three core areas: (1) Child Development and School Readiness, (2) Teachers and Teaching, and (3) Program and Environment. This Framework is being implemented in the Consortia and is designed to both evaluate early learning programs based on scientific early childhood research and provide a quality improvement pathway. Ratings were winnowed to seven elements in the three core areas:

1. Child Observation
2. Developmental and Health Screenings
3. Minimum Qualifications for Lead Teacher/Family Child Care Home (FCCH)
4. Effective Teacher-Child Interactions: CLASS Assessments
5. Ratios and Group Size
6. Program Environment Rating Scale
7. Director Qualifications

The RTT-ELC Consortia QRIS includes the three common tiers and two locally defined tiers for a total of five tiers. In sequence, California's structure is as follows:

- Tier 1 — Common (California's Title 22 CDSS licensing standards)
- Tier 2 — *Locally determined*
- Tier 3 — Common
- Tier 4 — Common
- Tier 5 — *Locally determined*

The Consortia, along with the Implementation Team, made significant progress in operationalizing the three common tiers across all the Consortia by developing a QRIS Consortia Implementation Guide. The Consortia selected a hybrid rating model that uses blocks for the first two tiers (a program must meet all criteria of the elements in that tier) and points for tiers three and above ranging from one to five points each; this is known as the Hybrid Rating Matrix (Matrix). In addition, work groups were formed to refine and clarify the Quality Improvement and Professional Development Pathways (Pathways) to support site progress on the Matrix. The Pathways are California's companion piece to the Matrix and together they form the Framework. California developed the Pathways by streamlining the rated elements on its Framework to prioritize research-based tools that demonstrate improved child outcomes. A separate work group was formed to address the Family Engagement Pathway. After a series of presentations and lengthy discussion, the Consortia adopted Strengthening Families as a common approach and added it to the Pathways.

By the end of 2013, after significant efforts to develop a continuum of activities to support continuous quality improvement, the Consortia adopted the Pathways Core Tools and Resources document with flexibility for local application. There was agreement that specifying a continuum of activities and TA might limit flexibility of each consortium to use the common tools and resources with TA mechanisms that meet local needs and priorities. Thus, the document includes eight Pathways. Each Pathway includes a goal, related Matrix element, the tools identified in the Framework, and myriad additional tools and resources, to support quality improvement and professional development.

The table below illustrates the elements and resources included in each core area in the QRIS.

Rated Elements/Indicators (in the Matrix)	Quality Improvement and Professional Development Elements (in the Pathways)
CORE I: Child Development and School Readiness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Observational Assessments • Developmental and Health Screenings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant/Toddler and Preschool Learning Foundations and Curriculum Frameworks • CCSEFEL • Health and Nutrition (United States Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Food Program), physical education/activity, and tobacco cessation training
CORE II: Teachers and Teaching	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Teacher/Family Child Care Homes Owner Education and Professional Development • Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS) Assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Growth Plan • CLASS or PITC Program Assessment Rating Scale
CORE III: Program and Environment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Rating Scales (ERS) • Ratios and group size (Centers only) • Director Qualifications and professional development (Centers only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Administration Scale (PAS) or Business Administration Scale (BAS) • Family Engagement

Local QRIS Implementation

To fully implement the most effective locally driven QRIS with the three common tiers, the Consortia members continued to meet frequently throughout 2013 as Consortia and in smaller work groups. This past year, the Consortia, with facilitation from the Implementation Team and guidance from the Rating and Monitoring work group, refined the Tiered QRIS and began rating their recruited local early learning programs. The Consortia received major support from the Implementation Team in guiding them in meeting this grant's key goal.

In total, the Consortia enrolled and rated 1,009 sites in 2013. Sites participating in the local QRIS include a variety of program funding types, including California State Preschool, General Child Care, Early Head Start, Head Start, Migrant, Tribal, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C, Child Care and Development Fund, and Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

At the local level, each consortium employed a variety of strategies to ensure measurable progress in QRIS participating sites. All members of the Consortia focused on creating an easily accessible and streamlined program to make participation a positive experience, and members strive to engage to sites using trusted staff with established relationships with local providers. Consortia members attributed their

success in promoting participation to having established quality improvement support systems, partnering with other existing quality improvement efforts, or responding quickly to participation barriers. For example, by including Head Start and EESD-contracted direct service subsidized programs (Title 5) in a local consortium, they could better understand and more quickly address specific barriers to participation by these program types.

In addition, Consortia members developed communication materials to inform stakeholder parents and community members about QRIS, and many developed Web sites as well. As the publicity around QRIS became more prominent throughout the year, promoting participation became easier.

The Consortia is proud of the strong participation in their community stakeholder meetings, focus groups, surveys, and planning team efforts, all of which allowed them to garner input on program elements and potential opportunities and impacts for their communities. They convened extensive and inclusive community consortium meetings and brought together all the stakeholders who operate existing quality enhancement programs, child care providers, parents, and other community agencies. The Consortia strengthened their partnerships and communication with Local Child Care and Development Planning Councils, school districts, and other CDE-funded quality improvement projects.

Leveraging and Aligning with Other Efforts

One of the most exciting successes to date expressed by the Consortia is the unprecedented opportunity RTT-ELC provides to refocus existing public and private investments on evidence-based and promising practices. In essence, RTT-ELC created an umbrella for other quality improvement and funding efforts. Prior to becoming Consortia members, several consortia noted their program quality efforts were well established but functioning as separate projects. With the QRIS Framework and the RTT-ELC goals and objectives, these independent projects have been aligned with the overarching program quality improvement system and are building upon each other. The key quality improvement tools, such as the ERS and the CLASS, are integral to the adopted Matrix and serve as a common foundation to align the work of other existing quality improvement efforts. Consortia view the RTT-ELC as a pilot, which provides opportunities to develop innovative service delivery models and develop focused partnerships that can later be taken to scale.

Locally, the Consortia have begun to fully integrate multiple funding streams from the federal, state, and local level into a comprehensive local quality improvement system—their QRIS. Most of the Consortia members noted in their Annual Performance Reports (APR) that they are using the local QRIS as a framework for all their other quality efforts and using the definition of quality developed for RTT-ELC implementation. Some consortia explicitly expressed that participation in RTT-ELC has become a catalyst in leveraging existing programs, such as the F5CA's Child Signature Program (CSP),

Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) Plus Program, and grant funding.

Evaluation

In December 2013, the CDE entered into a contract with the American Institutes for Research to evaluate the implementation, effectiveness, and impact of California's QRIS. For the validation study, California will pursue a rigorous study design and work plan to address the following:

1. Content validity—the extent to which the quality standards used for the QRIS ratings include the key domains of quality according to empirical research and expert opinion.
2. Concurrent validity—the association between the quality rating and independent measures of quality.
3. Reliability—the extent to which the ratings and rating components exhibit sound psychometric properties and differentiate programs as expected.
4. Sensitivity—the extent to which program ratings are affected by alternative rating calculation methods.
5. Quality improvement—how quality improvement supports and incentives embedded in the QRIS affect the quality of early learning programs or child outcomes.
6. Child outcomes—the association of quality rating levels with children's early learning and development outcomes.
7. QRIS implementation—documentation of how QRISs function and issues that arise during implementation or expansion.

The evaluation will also include a child outcomes and effectiveness study, which includes quality improvement, child outcomes, and system implementation.

Initial validation findings will be reported in December 2014.

RTT-ELC Reform Area III: Promoting Access to High-Quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs

California addressed this reform area by prioritizing state resources to early learning and development programs that are committed to a continuous program improvement process. This strategy will help move California further toward the goal of improved school readiness for children. Specifically, California chose to focus on two priorities: (1)

development and use of statewide, high-quality early learning and development standards; and (2) addressing children's health, behavioral, and developmental needs.

Early Learning and Development Standards

One of the strengths of California's application was our state's research-based early learning and development standards for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, known as Foundations, which align to the state's K–12 standards and companion curriculum frameworks. In June 2013, the CDE released the final volume of the series, the Preschool Learning Foundations, volume 3,¹ and its companion document, the Preschool Curriculum Framework, volume 3.² To support early childhood teachers, the CDE developed the California Early Learning and Development System which has the Foundations as the center and focal point of quality improvement services and resources. This system provides an integrated set of resources based on state-of-the-art information for early learning and development and best practices in early education. One of the sustainability issues addressed in the application was to make the content of these resources more accessible to the early childhood workforce. In August 2013, California Early Childhood Online (CECO),³ an RTT-ELC project, was launched with online modules on the California's Infant/Toddler Early Learning and Development Foundations and Preschool Learning Foundations. The modules provided on the CECO Web site enable early childhood practitioners to increase content knowledge and ability to provide developmentally appropriate experiences for children in their care. CECO provides access to comprehensive resources and courses in one centralized location to meet the ever-changing needs of the early childhood field.

The Pathways document supports program improvement through the incorporation of California's Early Learning and Development System, including the Foundations and Curriculum Frameworks, and the Desired Results Developmental Profile. The California Foundations and Frameworks are key resources that are used by coaches to inform site-level quality plans and individual professional development plans.

The Consortia also utilizes two of California's Child Care and Development Fund Quality Improvement professional development providers, the Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) and the California Preschool Instructional Network, to conduct training on the Foundations. Both of these elements of the Pathways are supported by CDE's Child Development Staff Retention Program (AB 212, Chapter 547, Statutes of 2000) and F5CA's CARES Plus staff education, professional development, and retention activities.

¹ The Preschool Learning Foundations Volume 3 can be found at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psfoundations.asp#psfoundvol3>

² The Preschool Curriculum Framework Volume 3 can be found at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/psframework.asp#psframevol3>

³ The California Early Childhood Online can be found at <http://www.caeearlychildhoodonline.org/>

Health Promotion

California supports health promotion practices in multiple ways, including through the Early Learning and Development Standards (Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations and the Preschool Learning Foundations), CECO Web site, and CDE Nutrition Services Division's Healthy and Active Preschoolers online modules.

Health, including screening, continued to be incorporated into the QRIS through both rated Matrix and the Pathways elements in the following ways:

- Hybrid Rating Matrix
 - Community Care Licensing as Tier 1 (health, safety, and nutrition)
 - ERS (health and safety)
 - CLASS (social-emotional)
 - Screening, both developmental (social-emotional) and health
 - Child Observation (DRDP includes social-emotional and physical development and health)
- Pathways
 - Social-Emotional Development (including California Collaborative on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning)
 - Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity (including United States Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program Guidelines)
 - Early Learning Foundations and Frameworks (health-related areas are listed above)
 - ERS (health and safety)
 - CLASS (social-emotional)
 - Early Childhood Educator Competencies (health, safety, and nutrition)

California's RTT-ELC also continued to leverage various screening efforts across the state in order to increase the number of children receiving screening and follow-up. Implementation Team members represented RTT-ELC at regular work group meetings of the State Interagency Team (SIT). The SIT work group is sponsored by the CDPH and focuses on the California Home Visiting Program (CHVP), which incorporates developmental screening into its program design.

California RTT-ELC funds provided training for Consortia members in all 16 counties to attend train-the-trainer sessions on the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and ASQ-Social Emotional screening tools. This training assisted in increasing access to screening and also included a component on providing follow-up and appropriate referrals.

In early 2013, a RTT-ELC contract with the CDDS was executed. As part of its scope of work, the CDDS, a PSA, committed to identifying and supporting best practices in developmental and health screening at the local level in collaboration with Consortia and other state-level and local partners. The CDDS is supporting the facilitation of the Statewide Screening Collaborative, which met once in 2013. The group includes

members from state and local government, county First 5 Commissions, and community partners.

California also successfully applied for an Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grant in 2013. The ECCS grant focuses on strengthening partnerships between the CHVP, RTT-ELC, F5CA, the First 5 Association, and the Office for Child Abuse and Prevention. Building on existing cross-agency systems change efforts lead by CHVP, the First 5 Association, California Project LAUNCH, Help Me Grow, and Strengthening Families, California will: 1) develop a mutually designed cross-agency agenda for change; 2) strengthen critical screening and referral mechanisms to ensure families are connected to services quickly; 3) promote development, implementation, and reimbursement of innovative, practical, preventative, and treatment interventions that mitigate adverse effects of toxic stress; and 4) provide mechanisms for California's early childhood workforce to better understand the importance of early brain development, reduction of toxic stress, and critical support of child and family resiliency. The ECCS Implementation Team will work in partnership with the RTT-ELC Integrated Action Team, composed of PSAs and Consortia representatives, to achieve grant outcomes.

RTT-ELC Reform Area IV: Early Childhood Education Workforce

The federal application directed states to support early childhood educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities by providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities. This directive fits California's existing infrastructure of support to the early learning workforce. Current professional development opportunities are intensive, sustainable, and focus on educators' success with children in their programs. Building upon these efforts, California developed additional professional development elements, described below, to effectively serve the early learning workforce, increase quality in early learning settings, and in the end, support children's learning and development outcomes.

Workforce Competency Framework

An essential statewide element aimed at supporting a strong workforce is the *California Early Childhood Educator Competencies (Competencies)*.⁴ California's robust *Competencies* (initiated in 2008 and completed in 2011) are aligned with the *California Preschool Learning Foundations* and the *California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations* and guide professional development and related quality improvement activities. The *Competencies* serve four interrelated purposes: 1) provide structure for workforce development; 2) inform Higher Education courses of study; 3) guide credentialing efforts; and 4) define educator skills, knowledge, and dispositions.

⁴ California Early Childhood Educator Competencies can be found at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/ececomps.asp>

The following projects were developed based on the *Competencies* to address various workforce needs:

The *Competencies Integration Project (CIP)*, a SAC project, created a rubric for mapping the *Competencies* to course work and professional development training activities. Because of the breadth of these competencies, the CIP also created a web-based Mapping Tool to assist faculty and professional development providers in mapping their learning objectives to specific competencies. In 2013, the California Competencies Mapping Tool became operational. Forty-two community colleges, 11 California state universities and 19 professional development organizations have utilized the tool. To date, 103 courses and 19 trainings have been mapped with the *Competencies* via the web-based Mapping Tool. Information can be found at <http://www.childdevelopment.org/cs/cip/print/htdocs/cip/home.htm>.

Another SAC project, *Early Childhood Educator Competencies Self-Assessment Toolkit (ECE CompSAT)*, was developed as a professional development resource that promotes self-reflection by the early childhood educators. The *ECE CompSAT* came online in February 2014 and will assist RTT-ELC site leaders and coaches with the development of professional growth plans by identifying the competencies needed for effective, high-quality early education practice.

Through the *Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP)*, the California Community College representatives, in collaboration with the EESD, developed the "Early Childhood/Child Development Lower Division 8" as a shared and essential portion of a lower division program of study. The RTT-ELC expansion of early learning core curricula at California community colleges has progressed. In October 2013, community college faculty expanded the initial *CAP* agreement to include a uniform set of common course outlines in the areas of Administration, Children with Special Needs, and Infant/Toddlers. A survey was conducted to further understand faculty interest and capture course uniformity in 103 colleges, offering the selected courses of study. Alignment will continue through 2015. Information can be found at http://www.childdevelopment.org/cs/cdte/print/htdocs/services_cap.htm.

Local Workforce Activities

The Consortia's RTT-ELC workforce support efforts are built upon their existing state structures (e.g., AB 212, CARES, CSP) seeking integration and sustainability. In addition, all are using existing local funding for workforce support of the QRIS through locally funded programs and initiatives for their QRIS. Emerging in this year's review of consortia reports is an increased "integration" of coaching strategies to enhance site-based Quality Improvement Plans.

In addition to statewide resources, the Consortia implemented technical assistance activities. All 17 consortia reported using coaching and site-level continuous

improvement plans. Most consortia combine coaching with advising (88 percent), mentoring (71 percent), and consultation strategies (82 percent). Over half of the Consortia reported using individual teacher professional growth plans (65 percent).

RTT-ELC Reform Area V: Measuring Outcomes and Progress

With the federal application's focus on understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry, California was able to capitalize on existing investments that demonstrate alignment between preschool and kindergarten. One of these investments was the development of a valid and reliable observational assessment of a child's development in key domains of school readiness. This assessment provides transitional kindergarten and kindergarten teachers, as well as their administrators, with a common platform to measure and plan for each child's development, school readiness, and ongoing instructional support.

Kindergarten Entry Assessment

The CDE has developed the Desired Results Developmental Profile—School Readiness (DRDP-SR) as a Kindergarten Entry Assessment. The DRDP-SR currently includes the domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development), approaches toward learning (including self-regulation), social and emotional development, and English language development. The CDE assessment partners, WestEd and University of California, Berkeley Evaluation, Assessment, and Research Center, have developed the measures for physical well-being and motor development (including adaptive skills) under an agreement with the state of Illinois, which will be field tested and calibrated in 2014. The DRDP-SR (2015) with all of these domains will go into use in Fall 2015.

Validity and reliability testing has been completed and a calibration study of the DRDP-SR was completed in 2013.

Each of the Consortia is working with districts in their counties to support training and utilization of the DRDP-SR within the first two months of starting transitional kindergarten or traditional kindergarten.

RTT-ELC Expenditures for 2013

In 2013, a total of \$27,086,414 was expended for RTT-ELC grant activities, \$20,000,000 of which was disbursed to the Consortia.