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The Department of Education (DE) presents the Orientation webinar for the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programs awarded grants in the 2010-2011 school year.

Penny Milburn and Judy Russell, early childhood consultants, are facilitating this webinar today.

This webinar is intended for new districts awarded the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children in 2010-2011 as well as districts awarded in previous years who would like to review the assurances of the program.

In this webinar we will be discussing the:

- Benefits of high quality preschool; and

Assurances and requirements associated with the implementation of the preschool program.

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We know that many of the newly awarded districts are not new to the early childhood world, However, we wanted to make sure that you were all validated for the efforts you have made and will continue to make for young children. It is indeed worthy work and will make a huge impact on the future of Iowa.

Longitudinal studies, some over a 40 year span, correlate quality preschool experiences with positive outcomes.

Children who receive **high quality** early learning experiences are more likely to:

- Exhibit stronger language, math, cognitive, & social skills;
- Be better prepared to cooperate in school and in the workforce;
- Develop more positive relationships with peers;
- Not repeat grades in school;
- Not require special education services or less intense services;
- Avoid incarceration or trouble with the law; and
- Stay in school.

We know that all of these elements create more successful and productive members of society. Each dollar we spend on preschool programming saves the state and the nation money in the long run.

According to the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER) 38 states provide some degree of state-funded preschool programming. Iowa's state-funded preschool programs rank 14 in the nation in providing high quality preschool programming.

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Like Iowa, New Mexico has a mixed service delivery model where children receive state-funded preschool in districts, Head Start classrooms as well as private preschools and child care centers.

As you can see by the New Mexico evaluation of the initial 4 years of preschool implementation, they have seen gains in child development across literacy and math. They also estimate that for every dollar invested, there is a \$5 benefit generated for the state.

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Oklahoma ranks #1 in the National Institute of Early Education Research (NIEER) study of state preschool services.

This Oklahoma study specifically measures Tulsa's 3,500 incoming kindergartners. The study indicates that children who attended the state-funded preschools demonstrated more significant gains in reading, math and writing skills than children in other programs or no programs at all. These research studies indicate what we have known all along, that skill development in children is enhanced through quality preschool programming.

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Governor Culver signed HF 877 into law on May 10, 2007. With an understanding that preschool programming was expensive and required start up costs, the intent was to provide a four-year roll out of funding to districts that were awarded funding. After the initial, on-time funding during year-one, in subsequent years districts receive .6 FTE or 60% funding for each eligible child through the school funding formula.

This map indicates the school districts that will be implementing the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program as of the fall of 2010. The four years of Statewide Voluntary Preschool are indicated by different colors. In Year 1—67 school districts were awarded grants. In Year 2—52 districts were awarded, in Year 3—57 were awarded and in Year 4—150 districts were awarded grants.

- In year 1, 2 and 3 of the SWVPP, funding was awarded through a competitive grant process.
- In year 4, (2010-2011) the law was modified to provide funding to districts that complied with the application process on a prorated basis rather than through a competitive grant process.
- In Year 4, 146 districts applied (150 with consortiums).
- The total number of districts providing the SWVPP in 2010-2011 including consortiums is 326. This map depicts 89% of all Iowa districts are participating in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Programming.
- It is estimated that in 2010-2011 over 21,000 four-year-old children will receive a high quality preschool experience as a result of the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program .
- One of the requirements of Chapter 16 is for districts to collaborate for the provision of the SWVPP.
- As indicated earlier districts deliver the Preschool Program through a mixed delivery system. The new districts awarded will partner with the following community agencies:
  - Licensed Community-Based Child Care or Preschool—33 districts, Faith-Based Preschool (Private, Community-Based Preschool Program)—15 districts, Non-Public Accredited Schools—7 districts, Shared Visions—7 districts, Early Childhood Special Education—108 districts, Head Start—13 districts.

Districts are also required to use one of the 3 approved program standards. This year 137 districts will follow the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, 13 districts will follow Head Start Program Performance Standards and 12 districts will follow the National Association for the Education of Young Children Standards and Criteria.

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Each district is required to adhere to assurances stipulated in HF 877. We will review these assurances in the next few slides.

#### **Personnel**

Teachers-- Maintaining appropriately licensed teachers is a building block of this program.

- Teachers must have a valid practitioner's license issued by the BOEE under Iowa Code chapter 272
- The teacher endorsement includes prekindergarten. The appropriate teaching endorsements are:

- Teacher Endorsement #100 -- Prekindergarten through grade three, including special education;
- Teacher Endorsement #103 – Prekindergarten through kindergarten; and
- Teacher Endorsement #106 – Prekindergarten through grade three.
- A Class B conditional license is also an appropriate license if it is for PK-3 including special education or PK-K. If teachers do not hold one of these endorsements they should apply to BOEE for a conditional license now!
- Note: If a teacher has an Early Childhood Teacher – Special Education 15.2 (19) endorsement (also known as #223) is not an appropriate endorsement to teach in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program because it does not include preschool general education. The teachers may apply to the Board of Educational Examiners for a Class B conditional license in one of the two acceptable teaching endorsement areas.
- The department understands that on occasion a Long-term Substitute is needed to provide instruction. The substitute does not need to hold one of the three PK teaching endorsements. The guidelines from the BOEE are the same for preschool as they are for K-12. A long-term sub may not substitute longer than 90 days in one classroom; after 90 days, the district administrator needs to write a letter to BOEE requesting an extension. Districts are not to begin the school year with a long-term substitute.
- There is no requirement that the teacher be an employee of the district; the teacher may be employed by a private provider or other public agency with whom the district has entered into an agreement or contract under Iowa Code chapter 28E. Contact the Board of Educational Examiners for specific teacher information at the following Website:  
<http://www.boee.iowa.gov/>.

#### Sufficient Number of Staff

The staff to child ratio must be 1:10,

One staff member must be the appropriately licensed teacher.

**Number of Children** Class size shall not exceed 20 children

**NOTE:** Districts must take children on IEPs into consideration and may want to hold spots for them.

**Instructional time** is required to be a minimum of 10 hours per week with an appropriately licensed teacher.

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**Qualifications for Teacher Assistants** - The district must also review the qualifications of the teaching assistants. For the Statewide Voluntary Preschool, the program standard determines the type of qualifications required for teaching assistants. This slide provides options that are open to teaching assistants for meeting state and federal requirements.

The information shown here is for Statewide Voluntary Preschool Districts. The standard is identified on the left column and the qualification options are on the top row. We receive many questions from districts asking if an assistant has an Associate's Degree or two years of college in a field other than early childhood, meets the qualifications. The asterisk next to the heading of Associate's Degree and Two Years of College refers the reader to additional information about this degree of education. As stated on the slide under the chart, for each of these assistants, the district must ensure that there is a staff development plan in place addressing how early childhood expertise is being provided in order to guide the curriculum.

The complete document is found at the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program website under Guiding Practices.

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**Supplement, not Supplant** - It is acceptable to supplement the preschool program with state and/or federal funds. It is not acceptable to supplant state and/or federal funds. Supplanting funds occurs when funds are used for the same child, at the same time to provide the same services. If the other state or federal funds were used to expand the day or provide transportation, it would be considered supplementing not supplanting and would be allowable.

**Integrate with other Preschool Programs** - It is the intent of the law for the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program to be integrated with other programs.

Programs with whom districts should be integrating include:

Early Childhood Special Education – the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program classrooms are a perfect site to include preschool children on IEPs.

Head Start and/or Shared Visions – combining children who are funded through Head Start or Shared Visions with those funded through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program in the same classroom provides for maximum use of dollars.

**Collaboration Expectations** – Districts are encouraged to expand the preschool program to include community partners. The district is expected to maintain the partnerships detailed in the application to the best of their ability. If after attempts to maintain a relationship, the partnership between the district and one of the community partners dissolves, it is essential that the district document all attempts to rectify the situation prior to dissolution.

**Materials** - Non-consumable materials that are purchased with the state funds for a private partner must be returned to the district if the partnership is terminated. This is extremely important to remember when providing funding for equipment and materials. A fence or playground structure would be difficult to return to the district.

**Secular Instruction** – All faith-based partners must ensure that, from the time instruction supported by Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program funds starts until the time such instruction ends, no religious instruction takes place. There is to be no interruption or “sprinkling” of such instructional time for any faith-based purpose. The burden of compliance is on the district. Districts are encouraged to include this agreement in the contract verbiage with the faith-based partner.

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### **Fiscal Accountability**

**Categorical Funds** - Preschool funds are categorical and must only be used for preschool. It is appropriate to use the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program funds to meet the requirements of Chapter 16 such as professional development for early childhood staff, materials and equipment required to meet program standards. Unspent funds may be carried over from one year to the next.

**Fiscal Agent** - The school district acts as the fiscal agent and all funds flow through the school district. When working with community partners, districts are advised to develop a 28E agreement or contract in order to clearly delineate the responsibilities, roles and expectations of each party. Districts are also encouraged to include a clause that all funding is subject to the availability of state and/or federal allocation. If several districts have partnered to develop a consortium, the fiscal agent was identified in the application.

### **Professional Development**

Professional development for district teachers should be addressed in their Career Development Plans. It is the expectation that districts will work with their AEA early childhood consultants for professional development that is appropriate for early childhood. The district professional development for K-12

staff, may not be appropriate to preschool staff and their time may be better used for early childhood specific areas or developing their IQPPS classroom portfolio.

Any professional development offered for district teachers must be made available to a non-district teacher.

It is appropriate to include classroom associates in the early childhood professional development.

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### **Program Standards**

All sites offering the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program, Early Childhood Special Education, and/or early childhood sites serving children on an IEP must adopt one of the three approved program standards. Districts indicated in the application which program standard each site would be following.

If the site is following:

- Head Start – Districts will enter into an agreement with the local Head Start Grantee to monitor the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program classrooms.
- NAEYC – the district will report their progress to achieve accreditation. The district and partners must meet NAEYC standards in the second year of implementation or select another standard.
- IQPPS – a verification visit typically takes place the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program implementation.

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### **Curriculum, Assessment and the Iowa Early Learning Standards**

The preschool program shall demonstrate how the curriculum, assessment, staff development, and instructional strategies are aligned to the Iowa Early Learning Standards. The teacher shall provide instruction on the skills and knowledge included in the Iowa Early Learning Standards. The Iowa Early Learning Standards align with the Iowa Core Curriculum to allow for fluid programming from preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Curriculum must be research-based or evidence-based. Most districts in Iowa are using the Creative Curriculum at this time.

Assessment must be research-based or evidence-based to provide information on children's learning and development. It is to be ongoing assessment that the teacher uses to drive individualized instruction for children in the classroom.

### **Family Involvement**

The preschool program shall involve families in at least one home visit, one family night and at least two parent/family–teacher conferences per year.

- Two parent/family-teacher conferences per year must occur for children in the preschool program. Many districts align these days with the school calendar.
- Home visits should not occur at the school. If families do not want the preschool staff at their home, then a neutral location should be agreed upon. The school building is not a neutral location. It is not acceptable to have parents sign a waiver for a home visit.
- Family night should not be the orientation to the Preschool Program. Examples may include math night, family fun night etc.
- Ongoing two-way communication – frequent messaging from classroom and home should be documented. The district ensures that families are able to provide information to the school as well receive information from the school. Communication should be two-way not just school to home.

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**Timelines** - More information on data and timelines will be in a subsequent webinar that will be scheduled as we get closer to the reporting dates.

Reporting timelines are crucial. There are two child count reporting dates and mechanisms:

The September 14 Preschool Grant Award funding provides the on-time funding.

The October 1 Certified Enrollment Report through EASIER provides subsequent year funding.

- Eligible children must be four years old on or before **September 15** of the school year and a resident of Iowa.
- Children on a support only IEP may be included in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool child count.
- Children who are five years of age and kindergarten eligible are not counted on the Statewide Voluntary Preschool child count therefore will not generate .6 funding.

### Five Year Olds – Children who are five on or before September 15

- May generate 1.0 funding ONLY if they receive programming that is equal to the amount of time that is specified in the school board policy for kindergarten children.
- They must be in programming that is in a DISTRICT BUILDING to be counted.
- Children who are five years old on an instructional services IEP will follow the IEP team determination.

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### **Confirmation of Program Standards**

Districts have 1 year to meet the program standards. Confirmation (or the verification visit in the case of IQPPS) will occur during the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of implementation.

It is important to remember that ECSE and EC sites serving children on IEPs are also included in program standards confirmation or verification.

- Districts must have an outside entity confirm or verify the adherence to the adopted program standard.
  - Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (IQPPS) Verification Visit – The DE completes a site visit. A webinar specifically for IQPPS will take place later in the summer.
  - Head Start –The district will report the outcome of the Head Start monitoring visits on the Early Childhood Application on the website. The district will need to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the local Head Start Grantee delineating the responsibilities of the district and Head Start agency. It is not unusual for districts to pay the local Head Start Grantee for these services.
  - National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – The district will report their progress to achieve accreditation. The district and partners must meet NAEYC standards in the second year of implementation or select another standard.

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If you would like more information on the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program for Four-Year-Old Children, please visit the website indicated on the slide.

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Thank you for participating in the Department of Education webinar for the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program. If you have additional questions, please feel to contact Penny or Judy at the information listed on this slide.