

Rhode Island State Personnel Development Grant Project Narrative

This application is being submitted by the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (**RIDE**), Office of Special Populations. Several partners have participated in the development of this application and will further participate in project implementation. Most notably, the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities (**SCD**) at Rhode Island College will manage and oversee many of the activities described in this narrative. The role and functions of the Sherlock Center, as well as the roles and functions of the other partners, will be described throughout this narrative.

I. Need for Project

A work group consisting of RIDE Office of Special Populations personnel, RIDE Office of Teacher Certification Personnel, SCD personnel, and other partners did a crosswalk of the State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators and the various state personnel plans to determine target areas of need for this application. The following table summarizes the needs that were identified through that process.

Table 1 – Crosswalk of SPP Indicators and Personnel Needs

SPP Indicators	Current APR Baseline Data and Targets	Major Personnel Needs
<i>Indicator 1 - Percent of youth with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma compared to percent of all youth in the state graduating with a regular diploma.</i>	<p align="center">Baseline – 72.89%</p> <p align="center">Target – 76.89%</p>	<p>Increase number of highly qualified secondary special educators.</p> <p>Revise certification requirements for secondary special educators to include more general curriculum content, collaboration strategies, transition planning.</p>
<i>Indicator 2 - Percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school compared to the percent of all youth in the state dropping out of high school</i>	<p align="center">Baseline – 27.11%</p> <p align="center">Target – 24.11%</p>	<p>Revise pre-service programs in secondary special education.</p> <p>Bring teachers with emergency certificates to full certification.</p>
<i>Indicator 13 - Percent of youth aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable a child to meet the post-secondary goals</i>	<p align="center">New Indicator</p> <p align="center">(data to be collected) Data from two samples reported in Project Narrative</p>	<p>Provide continuing education for existing teachers.</p> <p>Increase number of principals and special education administrators who can administer effective transition programs.</p>
<i>Indicator 14 - Percent of youth who had IEPs and who are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school</i>	<p align="center">New Indicator</p> <p align="center">(data to be collected) Data from two samples reported in Project Narrative</p>	
<i>Indicator 6 - Percent of preschool children with IEPs</i>		<p>Increase professional</p>

<p><i>who receive special education and related services in settings with typically developing peers.</i></p>	<p>Baseline – 70%</p> <p>Target – 85%</p>	<p>development re: RI Early Learning Standards.</p> <p>Increase number of programs that are standards based.</p>
<p>Indicator 7 – Percent of preschool children with IEPs who demonstrate improved: (a) Positive social emotional skills (including social relationships) (b) Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy) and © Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs</p>	<p>New</p> <p>Initial data reported in Project Narrative.</p>	<p>Develop a cadre of mentors who will provide technical assistance and professional development to early learning centers.</p>
<p>Indicator 3 – Participation and Performance of children with disabilities on statewide assessments: (a) Percentage of districts meeting the state’s AYP objectives for progress for disability subgroups (b) Participation rate for children with IEPs in a regular assessment. © Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level standards and alternate achievement standards.</p>	<p>2006 Assessment Data reported in Project Narrative</p>	<p>Provide professional development to “new” teachers entering the field re: (a) aligning curriculum standards with the needs of individual children; (b) Positive Behavioral Supports; (c) Inclusive Practices.</p> <p>Increase number of principals and special education administrators who understand how to effectively implement inclusive practices.</p>
<p>Indicator 5 – Percent of children with IEPs who are educated with typical peers</p>	<p>Baseline: Removed less than 21% - 65% Removed more than 60%-18% Outside Public School – 4.5%</p> <p>Target: Removed less than 21% - 80% Removed more than 60%-10%</p>	

	Outside Public School – 3%	
<i>Indicator 4 – Percent of districts identified as having a significant discrepancy in the rate of suspensions of children with disabilities for greater than 10 days a year.</i>	<p>Baseline – 1.54% 8 districts higher than 1%</p> <p>Target – all districts less than 1%</p>	<p>Implement School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports in 50% of elementary schools and 25% of middle and high schools.</p> <p>Embed PBIS concepts and strategies in pre-service courses.</p> <p>Increase number of principals and special education administrators who understand PBIS concepts.</p>

Based on this analysis, five areas of need were selected as the targets for the Rhode Island

SPDG:

1. To redefine the role of secondary special educators and to increase the number of highly qualified secondary special educators who are practicing in Rhode Island schools.
2. To create a professional development system based on the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards.
3. To decrease the number of behavioral incidents and suspensions and through implementation of a statewide system of School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS).
4. To increase the number of highly qualified leadership personnel.
5. To increase the number of highly qualified new teachers who begin their careers adequately prepared to provide effective instruction to students with disabilities.

These targets were reviewed by a “Partners Group” consisting of representatives of family organizations, colleges and universities and other partners. The Partners Group endorsed the targets and suggested various activities and strategies.

A. Secondary Special Educators

(1) Demographic Information

The number of students with disabilities (ages 14-21) in Rhode Island middle and secondary schools has increased in the past three years.

2004-2005	9,973
2005-2006	10,206
2006-2007	10,288

The number of secondary special educators has also increased to 1214 in the 2005-2006 school year. During the 2006-2007 school year, 293 of 1214 (24%) secondary special educators were not highly qualified. In all of Rhode Island, 8% of all core classes were taught by teachers who were NOT highly qualified; 27% of these were taught by secondary special educators. The number of secondary special educators with emergency certificates has also increased:

2005-2006	36
2006-2007	58

(2) Student Performance and Outcome Data

Although participation rates exceed 99%, the performance of students with disabilities on the *New England Common Assessment Program* (NECAP) continues to lag behind typical students.

The percent of students who met the standard on state assessments is:

	2005	2006
Reading – All Students	58%	62%
Reading – Students with IEPs	24%	27%
Mathematics – All Students	50%	53%
Mathematics – Students with IEPs	20%	23%
Writing – All Students	51%	46%
Writing – Students with IEPs	18%	14%

There has not yet been statewide measurement of the two transition indicators; however, three studies conducted by the Sherlock Center provides some insight into the transition experience of adolescents with disabilities and the outcomes achieved one year after graduation. The SCD conducted two follow-up studies of former students (2000, 2004) who had been out of school for at least one year. The following data summarizes these findings. First, participation in the transition process:

	2000 Graduates n = 196	2004 Graduates n = 95
Knew some/all of their transition goals	44%	46%
Student:		
attended IEP	75%	62%
met with someone beforehand	49%	44%
participated in person centered planning	17%	12%
received self determination training	11%	12%
Family:		
attended IEP	85%	88%
met with someone beforehand	40%	42%
participated in person centered planning	11%	9%
received self determination training	8%	7%

The second part of these studies analyzed a set of post school outcomes. These data are found on the following page.

Key Variables	Graduates from 2000 N = 196	2004 Sample N = 95
Employed	70.9%	70.5%
Health Insurance Through Employer	32.6%	28%
Mean Wage	\$7.60	\$9.85
Participation in Post Secondary Education or Training	21.7%	44.2%
Live with Family	72.7%	74.7%
Live in Apt/House	18.9%	25%
Belongs to Community Organizations/Clubs	46.2%	71%
Volunteers in Community	46.9%	40%
Registered to Vote	53.1%	59.6%
Voted in Last Election	17.5%	26.1%
Drivers License	43%	55%
Has Checking Account	44.8%	65%
Has Savings Account	75.5%	64%
Has Retirement Plan	11.9%	8.4%
Good – Excellent Health	86%	91%
Has Plans for Next Year	76.2%	75.8%
Has Plans for the Future	68.5%	59.1

Third, a 2004 Sherlock Center survey of 197 parents of transition aged students were asked the following:

	Percent of Parents reporting		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Whether they were given information to prepare for Transition Planning	35%	59%	0%
Whether students are prepared for transition planning	47%	26%	25%
Whether student's interests/choices are included in the plan	55%	17%	28%
Whether Transition IEPs reflect student's post school goals	43%	27%	30%
Whether schools have addressed their child's transition needs in			
Post secondary education or training	30%	33%	24%
Jobs	30%	36%	17%
Accessing state services	17%	39%	22%
Housing supports	19%	34%	16%
Leisure	23%	31%	19%
Health Care	19%	32%	17%
Transportation	24%	25%	19%
Whether other agencies were involved in Transition Planning	18%	43%	0%
Whether they were adequately informed about their child's options	35%	57%	1%.

Finally, the *National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 (NLTS Data Brief, 2005)* provides a national perspective..

57% of students provide input into transition outcomes

12% are leaders in the planning process

74% have transition plans that specify a course of study to achieve the stated outcomes

64% received instruction on transition planning

24% had assistance from schools in contacting colleges

24% had assistance from schools in contacting vocational schools

26% had assistance from schools in contacting other vocational schools
38% had assistance from schools in contacting state VR agency
57% of families received information about post school options.

The three RI studies and the NLTS strongly suggest that a large number of secondary students do not actively participate in the transition process and receive limited support from their school districts.

(3) Changing Roles of Secondary Special Educators

The traditional roles of secondary special educators have been (a) resource teacher, assisting students with class assignments, in class assessments, etc, and (b) special class teacher responsible for a small number of students in a segregated classroom or school setting. The focus on participation in the general curriculum (*IDEA, 1997, 2004*) and the standards-based initiatives stimulated by *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* have created the need for secondary special educators who have different competencies than their predecessors. Special educators need to learn both how to facilitate inclusion and how to align curriculum and content standards with the individual needs of students reflected in their IEPs (*Sharpe & Hawes, NCSET Issue Brief, 2003*). Several studies (*McLaughlin et al, 1999;*) advocate that special educators need to develop a consistent set of curriculum practices that provide a basis for instructional decision making.

Additionally, secondary special educators also need to develop skills that permit them to collaborate effectively with general educators in planning and instruction (*Sharpe & Hawes, 2003*). The special education literature is filled with models of collaboration. Specifically, the *Applied Collaboration* model (developed by the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration) focuses on professional development provided by a collaborative team

consisting of a general educator and a special educator. School based teams are lead through a five step decision making model:

- Step 1 - review the standard, performance task, curriculum demands, etc.;
- Step 2 – discuss the learning needs of the student;
- Step 3 – decide on student accommodations and determine responsibility;
- Step 4 – monitor and adjust;
- Step 5 – evaluate student performance using an established criterion.

What is unique about this model is that it begins with the standard and/or the curriculum task, rather than the student’s specific needs. Guralnik (*presentation at OSEP Project Directors Meeting*) stresses the importance of a common framework to guide decisions about curriculum and instruction. Beginning with the standard or curriculum task provides that common framework. The Sherlock Center has used a similar collaboration and decision making model (*Antosh, 2006*) to facilitate collaborative planning about the details of inclusion. Teams of parents, general educators and special educators use the daily classroom routine (and all the curriculum tasks contained therein) to make decisions about student participation in specific tasks. This model has been implemented with more than 175 teams. 93% report that it was an effective strategy for increasing the practicality of curriculum and instructional decision-making and increasing the likelihood that the “target student” would be effectively supported in an inclusive setting. This increases the sustainability of the model.

Similarly, secondary special educators need to develop greater competencies in facilitating transition planning and transition related activities. In RI, the IEP for students 14 and older is a documented individualized educational plan that generates goals and objectives on the basis of a student's outcome statements in the four broad areas of transition – employment,

postsecondary education, independent living, community participation. The transition outcome statements are to be derived from student engagement in self-determination activities. Self-determination can be defined as “the combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior” (*Abery & Stonecliffe, 1996*). Self-determination skills include self-advocacy, social skills, organizational skills, community and peer connections, communication, conflict resolution, career skill building, career development and computer/technological competency (*Martin & Marshall, 1996*; *Wehmeyer, Kelchner, & Richards, 1996*). In summary, the secondary special educator needs to:

- have strategies that actively engage students in transition planning;
- have strategies that promote self determination;
- have knowledge of post school resources and assist students/families to contact post school resources and organizations;
- provide families with information about transition planning and post school outcomes.

(4) Rhode Island Certification Issues

NASET (2005) quality indicators (standard 14.1) for best practice in transition programming state that all educators must meet the essential qualifications to perform their jobs. RI has no provision in its certification process for middle/secondary special education teachers to ensure they are trained/qualified/competent to lead/facilitate the transition/self-determination process. Thus, the development of transition/outcomes-focused IEPs for RI students 14+ are currently facilitated by middle/secondary special education teachers who are NOT required under current RI teacher certification regulations to have any coursework in transition planning or self-determination.

The Rhode Island certification for middle/secondary special educators requires either certification as an elementary education teacher OR as a secondary education teacher as a prerequisite. Thus, certification is achieved without any training or knowledge of the secondary general education curriculum.

(5) Summary of Secondary Special Educator Needs

- Secondary students continue to lag behind their typical peers on state assessments.
- A large number of secondary students do not actively participate in the transition process and receive limited support from their school districts
- 24% of secondary special educators are not highly qualified. 27% of the core classes taught by teachers who are NOT highly qualified are taught by secondary special educators.
- The number of teachers with emergency certificates continues to increase.
- Certification requirements permit teachers without any secondary curriculum training to be certified as secondary special educators.
- Certification does not require any training in transition planning or self determination.

B. Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Professional Development

(1) Incidence of Disability in Children 3-5

According to Rhode Island Department of Education Special Education census data for 2006, 3041 of Rhode Island's approximately 36,000 children, ages 3-5 are in special education, up from 2688 in the previous year.

(2) Current Outcome Assessment

Rhode Island is committed to supporting systems development both state-wide and locally that will produce child assessment and child outcome information that can be use for planning and continuous improvement efforts at all levels. The Rhode Island Department of

Education's Early Childhood Division, in partnership with the Department of Human Services' Child Care Office, has supported the development of locally-based systems for assessment aligned with the RI Early Learning Standards. The Departments have provided training on authentic assessment linked to the Standards to approximately 750 early care and education providers, including preschool special education teachers. The training promotes the use of developmentally appropriate tools and strategies that include observation, collection of student work, and input from the student's family.

To meet new federal requirements pertaining to Indicator #7, the Department of Education has committed to measuring the percent of preschool children with IEPs who demonstrate improved (1) Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships), (2) Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/ communication and early literacy); and (3) Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs (20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A)) in a way that:

- Aligned with the Standards
- Built upon the strengths and practices already in existence among public and community early childhood programs
- Met federal data collection and reporting requirements

As a result, RIDE has implemented *Creative Curriculum Assessment* in a cross-section of districts through six sampling sites - Newport, Coventry, Westerly, Cranston, Smithfield, and Central Falls. These districts were carefully selected to include representation of urban, rural, and suburban areas, and areas of diverse racial and socioeconomic profiles.

The Department of Education, Office of Integrated Supports for Diverse Learners, has begun the data collection process to strengthen evidence-based and data-driven decision-making

at the state and local level. Preliminary results from this data collection effort have helped to inform this proposal. Baseline data gathered for FFY 2006 (2006-2007) generated information regarding the entry status of 324 children ages 3-5 with IEPs. We now know the percentage of children at entry who are functioning at a level comparable to same-age peers and the percentage of children at entry who are functioning at a level below their same-age peers in the six representative communities:

<p>2006 (2006-2007)</p> <p>Total number of children = 324</p>	<p><u>Outcome Indicator 1: Positive social and emotional skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52% (170) entered at a typical level of functioning • 48% (154) were not at a typical level of functioning <p><u>Outcome Indicator 2: Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53% (170) entered at a typical level of functioning • 47% (153) were not at a typical level of functioning <p><u>Outcome Indicator 3: Use of appropriate behaviors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65% (204) entered at a typical level of functioning • 35% (111) were not at a typical level of functioning
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As the figures in Table above illustrate, a significant number of children ages 3-5 with IEPs are entering our system with significant needs in the areas of:

- Positive social and emotional skills
- Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills
- Use of appropriate behaviors

To adequately meet the needs of children ages 3-5 with IEPs, the Rhode Island Department of Education must support the development of quality, inclusive preschool settings staffed by qualified early care and education professionals equipped to support children in these areas.

(3) Inclusive Practice

Research has shown that students with learning disabilities benefit from educational services that are delivered in inclusive settings alongside typically-developing peers. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, reauthorized in 2004, requires that most students in special education be educated in their neighborhood schools in regular classrooms with their non-disabled peers. In Rhode Island, there is an over-reliance on self-contained settings to deliver services to students with disabilities. Twenty-nine percent, or about 8,900 of the 31,000 children with disabilities ages 3-21 receive services in self-contained classrooms. As of December 2006, only 21% of the 3041 Rhode Island children, ages 3-5 in special education, were receiving all of their services in inclusive settings according to Department of Education Special Education census data.

(4) Child Care Health Survey

To assist RIDE in assessing the current capacity of community-based providers, we analyzed results from the RI Department of Health's Child Care Health Survey. The survey results present alarming statistics regarding the numbers of children who were asked to leave child care placements due to behavioral issues. Forty three percent (43%) of child care center providers had asked at least one child to leave within the past six months due to behavior problems, compared to 12 percent of respondents from family child care homes. Within child care centers, preschoolers surfaced as the age group most frequently asked to leave (*Social/Emotional Health in Child Care -Survey Results, 2000*). These survey results also

demonstrate that intervention is needed to ensure that children and families are able to have their needs met in group care settings while remaining in a stable, caring, environment.

(5) Early Childhood Professional Development Needs

A majority of Rhode Island families rely on out-of-home child care, including center-based care and family child care homes. There are currently 1800 licensed child care programs in the state. Of these, 435 are child care centers and 1365 are licensed family child care homes. In 2003, 67% of Rhode Island children under age six had all parents in the workforce. Low-income families earning up to 225% of the federal poverty level are eligible for full or partial child care subsidies. The subsidy program includes regular early childhood and after school care and also covers activities (community athletics, art, music, etc.) for children up to the age of 16. It also subsidizes half of the cost of providing health coverage to child care workers. As of June 2005, 8,497 Rhode Island children under the age of six were enrolled in subsidized child care. Rhode Island has been successful in its efforts to significantly increase access to early care and education services. Access to care, however, does not necessarily mean that children are receiving high quality care, especially as it relates to early learning and cognitive development. Rhode Island must continue to focus on quality improvement efforts that will result in systemic change across all early care and education settings throughout the state.

(6) Qualifications for Early Care and Education Practitioners

Rhode Island's early care and education system provides a variety of settings for the out-of-home care and education of children ages 3-5. Minimum qualifications of teaching staff vary among settings. The following table outlines the minimum qualifications required for key personnel in various early care placements:

Qualifications for Early Care and Education Practitioners

	Function: Early Childhood Practitioner in charge of the classroom/children	Function: Assistant in the Classroom	Regulated by:	Estimated % of preschool population being served
Public Pre-School	Title: <i>Teacher</i> Minimum Qualifications: <i>BA in early childhood, Special Ed certified</i>	Title: <i>Teacher Assistant</i> Minimum Qualifications: <i>High School Diploma</i>	State: Rhode Island Department of Education	8% (3041)
Center-Based Child Care	Title: <i>Teacher Assistant*</i> Minimum Qualifications: <i>HS Diploma or equivalent plus 3 yr experience</i> <i>Must work under the supervision of a Head Teacher with RI Certificate in ECE or BA/MA in ECE or Child Dev</i>	Title: <i>Teacher Aide</i> Minimum Qualifications: <i>18 yrs or working toward a high school diploma or equivalent; participate in an ongoing early childhood staff development program</i>	State: Dept of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)	
Head Start	Title: <i>Teacher</i> Minimum Qualifications: <i>CDA or degree in early care-related field w/ experience</i>	Title: <i>Teacher Aide</i> Minimum Qualifications: <i>None specified</i>	Federal: Administration for Children and Families	7% (2700)
Family Child Care	Title: <i>Family Child Care Provider</i> Minimum Qualifications: <i>18 yrs old plus experience (parenting counts) and 10 hours of training every two years relevant to the care of young children</i>	N/A	State: DCYF	
Legal/non-certified Care	Title: <i>Legal/Non-certified care giver</i> Minimum Qualifications: <i>18 yrs/pass criminal background check</i>	N/A	State: DCYF	
Families /Non-regulated Care	N/A	N/A	N/A	

* Rhode Island Child Care Regulations state that each center shall have one staff member at the level of teacher assistant or beyond for each group of children

Eighty-five percent (85%) of Rhode Island's children are being cared for in environments where the highest standard required for the staff person assigned to a group of children, is a person with a high school diploma supervised by a Head Teacher who holds a Bachelor's degree.

(7) Summary of Early Learning Needs

- A significant number of children (ages 3-5) with IEPs are entering the education system with significant needs in social and emotional skills, acquisition and use of knowledge, and use of appropriate behaviors.
- Only 21% of the 3041 Rhode Island children, ages 3-5 in special education, were receiving all of their services in inclusive settings.
- Forty three percent (43%) of child care center providers had asked at least one child to leave within the past six months due to behavior problems.
- Eighty-five percent (85%) of Rhode Island's children are being cared for in environments where the highest standard required for the staff person assigned to a group of children, is a person with a high school diploma.

C. School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

(1) Suspension Data

During the 2004-2005 school year 1.52% of students with IEPs were suspended for more than 10 days – this is greater than the rate for typical students (1.36%). Similarly, in 2005-2006, 1.54% of students with IEPs were suspended for more than 10 days – this is again greater than the rate for typical students (.68%). During 2005-2006, eight school districts had special education suspension rates of more than 1%. The SPP target is to have no district with a suspension rate of more than 1%.

(2) Evidence Based Practices

Research provided by the National Technical Assistance Center on School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) documents the type of practices that prevent incidents of behavior and contribute to positive academic outcomes. The following excerpts from a recent *Talking Points on Positive Behavioral Supports* (Sugai, Horner, Eber; 2007) highlights research findings about SWPBIS:

- Schools can implement SWPBS with fidelity when supported by local trainers and coaches. These schools are perceived by their educators as being safer teaching and learning environments, begin to experience increases in proportion of 3rd graders who meet or exceed the state reading benchmarks, and experience decreases in their rates of office discipline referrals for major rule infractions. (*Colvin, Kame'enui, & Sugai, 1993; Horner et al., in preparation; Lewis et al., 1998; Metzler et al., 2001; Nelson et al., 1998; Safran & Oswald, 2003; Taylor-Greene et al., 1997.*)
- Rates of problem behaviors in hallways, playgrounds, cafeterias, and other nonclassroom settings can be decreased by improving the systematic and consistent use of active supervision, positive feedback, and social skills instruction. (*Colvin et al, 1997; Heck et al., 2001; Kartub et al., 2000; Leedy et al., 2004; Lewis et al., 2000; Lewis et al., 1998; Nelson et al., 1996; Putnam et al., 2003; Todd et al., 2002.*)
- Students with serious problem behavior can benefit from positive behavioral interventions that are based on information from functional behavior assessments. (*Fairbanks et al., 2007; Ingram et al., 2005; Todd et al., 1999*)
- Improvements in student behavior and school climate are related to improvements in academic outcomes. (*Fleming et al., 2005; Kellam et al., 1998; McIntosh et al., 2006; Nelson et al., 2006; Nelson et al., 1996; Wentzel, 1993*)

- Schools that invest in comprehensive school reform efforts and emphasize teaching social skills, parent involvement, academic and curricular restructuring, positive and preventive classroom and school-wide discipline are likely to experience decreases in antisocial behavior (e.g., vandalism, harassment, aggression). (*Gottfredson et al., 1993, 1996; Lipsey et al., 1993; Mayer et al., 1993; Tolan et al., 1994.*)

(3) Summary of Needs

- More than 1.5% of students with disabilities are suspended for more than 10 days.
- The Early Learning needs data presented earlier documents that a large number of children are asked to leave early childhood settings for reasons of behavior.
- The evidence re: the success of SWPBIS suggests that is a very effective model for preventing incidents of behavior in schools.

D. Highly Qualified Leadership Personnel

(1) Decreasing number of special education administrators

A comparison of the 2004 and 2005 RI special education personnel data documents a decrease in certified special education administrators from 81 to 60 – a decrease of 26%.

(2) Unfilled Administrative Vacancies – Attrition in Leadership Positions

There has been significant attrition in educational leadership in Rhode Island in recent years. Although there is no comprehensive quantifiable data, there have been several stories in the media about the difficulty school districts are having in recruiting and keeping principals. For example, one district with 8 principals and 5 assistant principals ended last school year with 6 acting principals and 3 acting assistant principals. They began this year with 3 of those positions still unfilled and an acting Special Education Director. Similar difficulties exist with recruiting and retaining Special

Education Administrators. Consider the following from a 2002 survey of special education administrators:

Percent of school districts with the same Special Education Director for the past 5 years	34%
Percent of school districts with two Special Education Directors in the past 5 years	41%
Percent of school districts with 3 or more Special Education Directors in the past 5 years	25%

The Special Education Administrators survey asked how many Special Education Directors their district has had in the past 5 years. The average number was 2.1. The survey indicated that 36% of all Special Education Administrators in the responding districts have left in the past 5 years. There is little stability in educational administration at the current time. The Partners Group felt that this contributed to the diminished capacity of some of the local schools and, should be a priority for the State Improvement Grant. Thus, there is a need both to recruit and prepare educational leaders who impact children with disabilities and to support those leaders in ways that add to the longitudinal stability of the system. Special Education Administrators were asked for suggestions on how to do this. Their suggestions emphasized the use of other effective educational leaders as mentors and the creation of regional networks for technical support. These suggestions for stabilizing leadership were the foundation for one of the major goals of this State Personnel Development Grant.

(3) Rhode Island Certification Issues

The certificate for “Administrator of Special Education” requires only three credits in “Administration of Special Education”. That is a minimum requirement that does not permit extensive discussion of evidence based practices and implementation strategies. The Rhode Island

certificate for “School Principal” does not require any coursework in special education. The Partners Group identified these gaps in training as a significant issue that impacts on the potential of schools to provide effective, standards-based instruction for students with disabilities in inclusive settings. The Partners Group recommended that both certificates be revised to include more extensive special education content.

E. Induction of New Teachers

(1) Annual Performance Indicators

As stated earlier, students with disabilities in Rhode Island lag behind their typical peers in achieving the standard on state assessments. Twenty-nine percent, or about 8,900 of the 31,000 children with disabilities ages 3-21 receive services in self-contained classrooms. As of December 2006, only 21% of the 3041 Rhode Island children, ages 3-5 in special education, were receiving all of their services in inclusive settings according to Department of Education Special Education census data. A higher percentage of students with disabilities were suspended for 10 or more days than the percentage of typical peers. All of these data document the need for improvement in the quality and efficacy of services for students with disabilities.

The Sherlock Center Consumer Advisory Committee includes several young adults with disabilities who graduated from high school within the last five years. These young adults strongly recommended that “all” school personnel receive training in evidence based practices that will improve outcomes for students with disabilities. The magnitude of that task makes it impractical. However, the Partners Group modified the recommendation and suggested that all “new” teachers entering the field could receive such training. Thus, that became one of the goals of this project.

(2) Schools Making Insufficient Annual Progress

15 Rhode Island elementary schools (13%), 11 middle schools (18%), and 23 high schools (40%) made insufficient AYP progress (*Infoworks, 2006*). Additionally, six school districts (17%) have begun to receive intervention through the RI Progressive Supports and Intervention System. An additional six districts are being “watched”. Literally, one third of Rhode Island school districts are at some degree of risk. Many of these districts are the cities and towns with the highest rates of poverty. There is a relationship between teacher longevity and poverty (*RICert, 2006*). The Partners Group recommended that new teachers working in these districts receive technical assistance and support to increase the odds of retention. Thus, this project will provide technical assistance to those teachers.

II. Significance of Project

The first three goals of the project focus on core systemic issues – (1) redefining the essence of secondary special education, (2) creating a standards-based model for early learning centers, and (3) implementing a school wide model for developing and teaching positive behavioral expectations and for decreasing the incidence of inappropriate behavior. The significance of these goals lies in three questions:

1. Is there evidence that the strategies to be employed will work?
2. How will the core system change?
3. Will a large enough segment of the population be impacted to produce real systems change?

The last two goals of this project focus on two categories of school personnel (leadership personnel and new teachers) that are in unique positions in the education system. The significance of these goals lies in two other questions:

1. How can these two categories of people be supported so that they implement evidence-based practices in their schools/classrooms?
2. Will the use of these practices improve outcomes for students with disabilities?

These questions will be answered in the project evaluation.

A. Secondary Special Educators

(1) Is there evidence that the strategies to be employed will work?

The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition provides analysis of the trends in the literature. In a 2003 *Issues Brief*, Morningstar and Clark describe five areas critical to any program offering transition personnel development:

1. ***Knowledge of principles and basic concepts of transition education and service***—knowledge and application of transition services requirements under IDEA as well as emerging and recommended practices focusing on transition planning and the Individualized Education Program (IEP).
2. ***Knowledge of models of transition education and services***—knowledge of specific program models that focus on individualized planning and align with general secondary education, including models of student-focused planning, student development, family involvement, and interagency collaboration, as described by leaders in the field (Blalock et al., 2003; DCDT, 2000).
3. ***Skills in using strategies for developing, organizing, and implementing transition education and services***—skills needed to implement effective models of transition, as well as transition assessment, service coordination, and curriculum planning within the context of general and special transition instructional programs.

4. ***Knowledge and use of collaboration competencies***—competence in service coordination with the complex array of agencies, programs, and services supporting young adults with disabilities.
5. ***Knowledge and skills to address systemic problems in transition services delivery***—capacity to understand and address barriers and strategies for planning, developing, implementing, and promoting transition services and programs at local, state, and federal levels. The focus is at the programmatic structural and systems level (Kohler, 1998).

Lehr (2004) describes “research-based” practices that increase the likelihood of school completion. These include:

- *Personal/affective interventions.* Examples include retreats designed to enhance self-esteem, regularly scheduled classroom-based discussion, individual counseling, and participation in lessons on interpersonal relations.
- *Academic interventions.* Examples include provision of special academic courses, individualized methods of instruction, and tutoring.
- *Family outreach strategies.* Examples include increased feedback to parents or home visits.
- *Interventions addressing school structure.* Examples include creating schools within schools, re-defining of the role of the homeroom teacher, and reducing class size.
- *Work-related interventions.* Examples include vocational training and participation in volunteer or service programs.

The majority of interventions were considered personal/affective (71%) followed by those that included an academic focus (49%). Nearly three quarters of the individual studies utilized multiple types of interventions (e.g., academic and family outreach).

Earlier in this narrative, we referenced evidence-based strategies (e.g., Applied Collaboration) that have proven effective making judgments about aligning general education curriculum content with the needs of individual students. We also discussed transition planning and self determination.

Thus, these skill sets will be the basis for all project activities pertinent to secondary special education.

(2) Will the core system change?

This project proposes to change the two core systems that govern teacher preparation. First, the requirements for certification will be revised to reflect the skill sets discussed above. Second, pre-service preparation programs will also be revised. Changes in certification requirements always stimulate changes in pre-service preparation.

(3) Will a large enough segment of the population be impacted to produce real systems change?

This project will provide professional development to three groups of teacher candidates:

- Recruitment efforts will be targeted to attract candidates to secondary special education;
- Using a non-traditional path to certification (the Rhode Island I-Plan), the teachers who currently hold emergency certificates will be brought to full certification;
- Continuing education will be provided to existing teachers to update their competencies in the targeted areas.

Thus, we are confident that we have identified strategies that work, that we are impacting the core structures that govern teacher preparation, and that we are reaching a large enough segment of the secondary teacher population to have a positive effect on student outcomes.

B. Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Technical Assistance Project

(1) Is there evidence that the strategies to be employed will work?

Based on the identified needs of young children in Rhode Island and the professional development needs of early care and education professionals, The Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Integrated Support for Diverse Learners (Office) has established the following outcomes for the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Technical Assistance Project:

1. Child outcomes, as measured in the annual State Performance Plan for children with disabilities, will improve as a result of participation in a high quality, Standards-based classroom and as a result of inclusion with typically developing peers.
2. A cadre of highly skilled educators who can serve as mentor teachers and/or Early Learning Standards Trainers, will develop and increase the State's capacity to provide future training in Rhode Island Early Learning Standards and professional development opportunities that are more comprehensive through the use of technical assistance and mentoring.

There is a strong connection between the development a child undergoes early in life and the level of success that the child will experience later in life. (*Good Start, Grow Smart: The Bush Administration's Early Childhood Initiative*). Research supports and practice confirms that high-quality early childhood programs have a direct influence on children's outcomes. The *No Child Left Behind Act* draws attention to the need to prepare children before they start school. Recent brain research has placed a spotlight on the significance of the early years in human

development. This research focuses on the capacity of children to learn and the conditions that optimize the learning experience. “What children learn before coming to school is vital to their success. The first five years of a child’s life are a time of tremendous physical, emotional, social, and cognitive growth. Children enter the world with many needs in order to grow: love, nutrition, health, social and emotional security, and stimulation in the important skills that prepare them for school success.” Our nation’s early childhood initiative, *Good Start, Grow Smart* is designed to help States and local communities strengthen early learning for young children to ensure that young children are equipped with the skills they need to start school ready to learn. The initiative encourages states to set quality criteria for early childhood education that includes the establishment of Early Learning Guidelines, voluntary State guidelines aligned with K-12 standards that can be adapted to various child care settings.

(2) Will the core system change?

The number one goal of Rhode Island’s Children’s’ Cabinet echoes the goals of the nation’s Good Start, Grow Smart initiative: ***All children enter school ready to learn regardless of socio-economic status, home language, special health needs or disabilities.*** There are three steps to this initiative that will insure its impact and long term sustainability:

Step 1: Developing the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards

Project leaders intend that the Standards be used by early care and education practitioners, families, schools, community members and legislators to design and support a comprehensive system of high quality early childhood programs for young children in Rhode Island leading to success in school. The Early Learning Standards:

- inform educators in the development of curriculum

- inform families about the development of four-year-old children who are about to enter kindergarten
- focus a conversation among families, community members and legislators about the education of young children
- provide a framework for administrators to oversee curricula practices and advocate for resources
- guide the selection of assessment tools that are appropriate for learners from a variety of backgrounds with differing abilities.

Step 2: Implementing Standards-Based Programs

The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Project, through a contract with the RI Department of Human Services, is housed within the Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Integrated Support for Diverse Learners. The Office has worked with the inter-departmental Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Steering Committee to develop a vision and approach for improving the quality of early care and education through implementation of Standards-based programs.

Rhode Island has developed a model for implementing Standards-based programs that focuses on how Standards are used as a Framework to:

- Design **curriculum** that is aligned with the standards
- Engage in **authentic child assessment** that is aligned with the Standards and used to enhance curriculum
- Use information gained through assessment to provide **differentiated teaching and learning** for each and every child

- **Engage families** in all aspect of the program and as partners in their child’s education and development

In addition to the four components of a Standards-based program, Project leaders recognize that Standards for Children, by themselves, have limited impact on program quality and outcomes for all children. We have, therefore, designed a system of support that includes the following three elements:

- **Level I: Standards for Children-** The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards- a set of domains, learning goals, and expectations for what children should know, understand, and be able to do to be successful in school
- **Level II: Standards for Practitioners-** a set of competencies for early childhood professionals that are necessary to successfully implement the four components of a Standards-based program
- **Level III: Standards for Programs-** a set of program standards and indicators for program administrators that guide the continuous quality improvement of Standards-based preschool programs through the development of program-wide philosophy, policies and procedures, and systems of support for teaching staff and other practitioners.

Step3: Follow-up Technical Assistance

Early Learning Standards project leaders are keenly aware through evaluation data and anecdotal feedback from project participants, that our training alone does not immediately result in high performing teachers and improved classroom quality; thus a system of technical assistance will be implemented.

The Initiative will design and implement professional development opportunities that address what we know about the factors that facilitate and present barriers to the inclusion of young children with disabilities in early childhood programs. Factors to be addressed include:

- Administrators, teachers, and families define inclusion differently- Program participants may define inclusion in ways that make sense to their local setting and, through professional development, will adopt a common definition based on federal laws, research, and best practice
- Beliefs about inclusion influence its implementation- It is critical that participants be introduced to the latest research and compare research to the beliefs they hold. Professional development will provide opportunities to discuss their beliefs in a safe environment (Lieber, Capell, Sandall, Wolfberg, Horn, and Beckman, 1998)
- Programs, not children, have to be ready for inclusion- This type of change will require ongoing planning, training, and support.
- Collaboration is the cornerstone to effective inclusive programs- This aspect of inclusive programming poses one of the greatest challenges. Professional development will acknowledge this challenge and provide strategies for fostering collaborations among the different adults working with each child. (Lieber, Beckman, Hanson, Janko, Marquart, Horn, and Odom, 1997)
- Adequate support is necessary to make inclusive environments work- Full inclusion requires that specialized instruction be delivered through a variety of learning strategies and embedded in ongoing classroom activities (Schwartz, Billingsley, and McBride, 1998). To be successfully, both administrators and educators need support in the areas of

training, personnel, materials, planning time, and ongoing consultation. (Odom, Peck, Hanson, Beckman, Kaiser, Lieber, Brown, Horn & Schwartz, 1996)

The Initiative has defined the professional competencies needed by early childhood educators to successfully implement inclusive settings for young children. Professional competencies for early childhood educators in the area of differentiated teaching and learning include:

- Possess knowledge of the successive developmental steps preceding and succeeding the Standards
- Utilize child assessment information to determine the developmental levels of children in all areas of the Standards with an appreciation of how to assess the developmental levels of children with cultural and linguistic differences
- Coordinate with special education to ascertain the developmental levels of children with disabilities
- Demonstrate skills and strategies for identifying the learning styles (multiple intelligences) and interests of children
- Plan and implement multi-level learning opportunities using various methods of instruction to support each child's learning based on their development levels, learning style, and interests
- Collaborate with special education to obtain support in planning and implementing effective learning strategies for children with special need
- Improve practice in the area of differentiated teaching and learning on a continuous, ongoing basis

(2) *Will the core system change?*

The development and implementation of standards-based early learning programs is a systemic change. As stated above, this strategy has been endorsed by the Rhode Island Children's Cabinet.

(3) Will a large enough segment of the population be impacted to produce real systems change?

This initiative will rely on mentoring as an effective professional development strategy and as the strategy for reaching a greater percentage of the early childhood educators.

The joint position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education (NAECS/SDE) describes four conditions under which effective early learning standards can be developed and implemented. The fourth condition reads as follows:

“Effective early learning standards require a foundation of support for early childhood programs, professionals, and families” and further states that “significant expansion of professional development is essential if all early childhood teachers and administrators are to gain the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to implement early learning standards.”¹

The position statement identifies specific examples of efforts that work such as in-depth professional development, coaching, and mentoring for teachers, administrators, and teacher educators. The Statement further explains that these efforts should not only focus on the Standards themselves but on appropriate curriculum, teaching strategies, and assessment tools that together make up a systematic approach to improving outcomes for children.² Professional

¹ *Early Learning Standards: Creating the Conditions for Success* (2002) National Association for the Education of Young Children

² Ibid.

development programs, support staff, and teamwork by parents and school personnel are the ingredients for creating challenging and supportive educational experiences for all children.³

Early childhood professionals who have successfully included young children with special needs reported that more than staff, money, and expertise, they needed support from peers and specialists along with a willingness to adapt to new environments.

The RI Early Learning Standards Technical Assistance Initiative will identify the group of Early Learning Standards professional development graduates who demonstrate the highest potential for successful implementation of the Standards to improve quality and outcomes for children and provide this group with technical assistance and mentoring services and support this group in fully implementing the Standards.

Through technical assistance and mentoring, the Initiative will:

- strengthen the core competencies of a large cadre of early childhood professionals who have demonstrated a commitment to improving quality through full implementation of a Standards-based program
- assist program administrators in designing program philosophies, written procedures, and systems of support for their staffs to support full implementation of the Standards, improve program quality, and increase outcomes for *all* children
- groom a cadre of mentor teachers/mentor classrooms who, in turn, will support their early childhood colleagues in improving quality, providing quality, inclusive settings for all children, and improving child outcomes

³ *The Benefits of an Inclusive Education: Making It Work*, NAEYC Resources
www.naeyc.org/resouyrce/eyly/1996/07.htm

The Initiative will utilize evidence-based strategies to support early childhood professionals in building the professional competencies that result in improved practice, high-quality programs, and improved outcomes for children. Strategies include:

- Customized technical assistance that is based on theories and best practice associated with:
 - Adult learning theory- Technical assistance providers will apply adult learning theory to their work, recognizing that technical assistance must provide experiences that are self-directed, experiential, relevant, and that utilize a variety of learning strategies. The following key principles will frame professional development activities designed for teachers (Speck, 1996):

Adults will commit to learning when the goals and objectives are considered realistic and important to them. Application in the 'real world' is important and relevant to the adult learner's personal and professional needs.

Adults want to be the origin of their own learning and will resist learning activities they believe are an attack on their competence. Thus, professional development needs to give participants some control over the what, who, how, why, when, and where of their learning.

Adult learners need to see that the professional development learning and their day-to-day activities are related and relevant.

Adult learners need direct, concrete experiences in which they apply the learning in real work.

Adult learning has ego involved. Professional development must be structured to provide support from peers and to reduce the fear of judgment during learning.

Adults need to receive feedback on how they are doing and the results of their efforts. Opportunities must be built into professional development activities that allow the learner to practice the learning and receive structured, helpful feedback.

Adults need to participate in small-group activities during the learning to move them beyond understanding to application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Small-group activities provide an opportunity to share, reflect, and generalize their learning experiences.

Adult learners come to learning with a wide range of previous experiences, knowledge, self-direction, interests, and competencies. This diversity must be accommodated in the professional development planning.

Transfer of learning for adults is not automatic and must be facilitated. Coaching and other kinds of follow-up support are needed to help adult learners transfer learning into daily practice so that it is sustained.⁴

- Process consultation- Technical assistance providers will engage teachers in the practice of *process consultation* by involving them in 1) the definition of the problem, 2) the development of possible solutions, and 3) the proposal for a final

⁴ Courtney, S.; Speck, S.; and Holtorf, P. (1996) "The Impact of Motivation, Volition, and Classroom Context on Adult Learning." Proceedings of the 15th Annual Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education, , Lincoln: University of Nebraska.

recommendation. In this way, teachers will take an active role in the learning process, rather than solely relying on the consultant's expert opinion. This will enable the teacher to be more independent of the consultant as time goes on.^{5 6}

- Mentor/coaching- In the early childhood arena, mentoring is a field-based approach to professional development that encourages early childhood professionals to understand and implement new research-informed ideas and practices within a non-evaluative, supportive environment.⁷ Technical assistance providers will be well-versed in characteristics of effective mentoring relationships and employ these strategies in their work with individual teachers participating in each cohort.
- Reflective supervision- This practice, borrowed from the medical and social work field, promotes the skills of active listening and thoughtful questioning among supervisors and coaches and has tremendous implications for early childhood professional development. Technical assistance providers will engage in respectful collaboration with teachers to help them reflect on their work experiences, practice new skills, take risks, and incorporate successful experiences into future practice.⁸

- Professional portfolio development

⁵ Block, Peter. (1999) Flawless Consulting: A Guide to Getting Your Expertise Jossey- Bass Publishers.

⁶ Dougherty, A. Michael. (1995) Consultation: Practice and Perspectives in School and Community Settings. Brooks/Cole Publishing Co.

⁷ Holloway, John. "The Benefits of Mentoring." Educational Leadership (vol. 58, number 8, May 2001). *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*. Reprinted with permission.

⁸ Bertacchi, J. & T. Norman-Murch. (1999). "Implementing Reflective Supervision in Non-clinical Settings: Challenges to Practice". *Zero to Three* 20(1): 18-23.

Within the field of early childhood, the professional portfolio is becoming a critical tool that supports teachers as self-directed, constructivist, life-long learners.⁹

Every teacher participating in the Initiative will document their professional growth and development through professional portfolios. Professional portfolios will include self-assessments of the professional competencies associated with implementing a Standards-based program (curriculum, child assessment, differentiated teaching and learning, and family engagement), goals and activities, artifacts, and reflections. Technical assistance providers will orient teachers to the portfolio development process and support individual teacher in building their portfolios as they demonstrate new competencies and implement new practices. Through portfolio development, teachers will begin a cycle of continuous quality improvement that will continue beyond the technical assistance experience.

In addition to building a cadre of early childhood professionals to serve children in inclusive settings, the Initiative will groom a number of professionals across the state to serve as mentors to their early childhood peers and colleagues. Teachers who have demonstrated success in their efforts to improve quality by implementing Standards-based programs will be invited to join the Initiative's Mentor Teacher/Mentor Classroom Program.

Formal mentoring programs have roots in the field of business management. World-renowned management theorist Rosabeth Moss Kanter concluded that having a mentor was critical to career success. Knowing that early childhood teachers learn best through observation, practice, and reflection within the context of a respectful collegial relationship, the initiative will groom a cadre of mentor teachers/mentor classrooms to support program-wide and community-wide implementation of the Early Learning Standards. Each year, the initiative will identify

⁹ Jones, Marianne and Shelton, Marilyn (2006). Developing Your Portfolio- A Guide for the Early Childhood Student or Professional. New York: Taylor and Francis Group p. 19

teachers and classrooms that, as a result of technical assistance and support, exhibit best practice and quality improvement in one or more of the key component of a Standards-based program, (1) curriculum, (2) assessment, (3) differentiated teaching and learning, and (4) family engagement. Teachers will also be assessed to determine if they have the skills and qualities associated with effective mentoring. Drawing from current literature on mentor/coaching strategies, the Initiative will develop a structured program that offers training and ongoing support for this cadre of prospective mentor teachers.

This select group will be invited to participate in the Mentor Teacher/Mentor Classroom program that offers:

- Formalized training in becoming a mentor teacher
- Supports for building a mentor classroom
- Protocols for classroom visits
- Recognition and incentives for being designated as a mentor teacher
- Ongoing support and regular group meeting with the statewide network of mentor teachers

In exchange for participation in the Mentor Teacher/Mentor Classroom program, participants will be expected to make a professional commitment to mentoring their peers by providing them opportunities to:

- Engage in a long term mentoring relationship with the mentor teacher
- Visit their classroom and engage in focused discussion about what they observe to advance their own practice in one or more components of a Standards-based program

C. School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

(1) Is there evidence that the strategies to be employed will work?

The research summarized on page 19 of this narrative documents the efficacy of the SWPBIS model. The first two cohorts of RI schools who (with training and assistance from the Sherlock Center) are implementing the SWPBIS model have been collecting SWIS Office Referral Data for about six months. In the schools that have achieved an 80% criteria on their School Evaluation Tool (SET), there has already been a decrease in behavior incidences. We are confident that SWPBIS is effective.

(2) How will the core system change?

SWPBIS is a systemic model. It involves developing capacity (through a Leadership Team structure) at (a) the state level, (b) the district level, and (c) the school level. The Sherlock Center has taken the lead in establishing Leadership Teams at the state level and in 42 schools. This project will give us the capacity to develop additional school teams and to develop capacity for district wide implementation in at least ten school districts.

SWPBIS is also a whole school model. Its efficacy partially rests in that all school personnel commit to common expectations, a common reinforcement system, and a common system for office discipline referrals.

(3) Will a large enough segment of the population be impacted to produce real systems change?

The stated goal of the SWPBIS part of the SPDG project is that 50% of Rhode Island elementary schools and 25% of middle and secondary schools will implement SWPBIS by the end of the project. 80% of these schools will implement SWPBIS with fidelity, as indicated by an 80% criterion on the *School Evaluation Tool* (SET). We also intend to SWPBIS practices and procedures will be embedded in classroom management courses at all Rhode Island colleges and universities that offer teacher preparation programs.

Thus, we are again confident that SWPBIS is a model that is effective, that it is systematic, and that we will reach 50% of Rhode Island schools by the end of the SPDG.

III. Project Design

A. Goals, Objectives and Outcomes

The Rhode Island State Personnel Development Grant has five major goals.

1. To redefine the role of secondary special educators and to increase the number of highly qualified secondary special educators who are practicing in Rhode Island schools.

Objectives and Outcomes:

1.1 The requirements to be fully certified as a “Special Educator of Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities” in Middle/Secondary Schools will be revised..

1.2 Pre-service programs in Rhode Island colleges and universities that prepare teacher candidates for this certificate will be revised. These programs will include (a) an increased number of courses in general curriculum content areas, (b) coursework in collaborative decision making, (c) coursework in transition planning and self determination, (d) practicum experiences that acquaint the candidate with community organizations and resources, and (e) student teaching experiences in inclusive, collaborative settings.

1.3 A non-traditional path to certification will be developed using RIDE’s I Plan system. A minimum of 10 candidates per year will achieve certification through this path.

1.4 A minimum of 25 new students will be recruited each year and will matriculate into pre-service programs in secondary special education. 30% of the new recruits will be from minority cultures and races.

1.5 The number of highly qualified secondary special educators will increase.

1.6 Secondary special educators who complete these pre-service programs will use instructional practices that result in an increased number of students (a) who achieve the standard on state assessments; (b) who graduate from high school with a diploma; (c) who participate actively in transition planning; (d) who have transition plans with clearly stated outcomes, a defined course of study, and connections to community organizations; and (e) who are employed or involved in post secondary education two years after graduation.

2. To create a professional development system based on the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards.

Objectives and Outcomes:

2.1 A cadre of highly skilled educators who can serve as mentor teachers, Early Learning Standards trainers, and technical assistance providers will be developed. This will increase RIDE's capacity to provide future support to early care and education practitioners in the form of RIELS training, technical assistance, and mentoring services.

2.2 Child outcomes, as measured for the Annual Performance Review, for children with disabilities will improve as a result of participation in a Standards-based classroom and as a result of inclusion with typically developing peers.

3. To decrease the number of behavioral incidents, and suspensions and expulsions through implementation of a statewide system of School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS).

Objectives and Outcomes:

3.1 50% of Rhode Island elementary schools and 25% of middle and secondary schools will implement SWPBIS by the end of the project.

3.2 80% of these schools will implement SWPBIS with fidelity, as indicated by an 80% criterion on the *School Evaluation Tool* (SET).

3.3 SWPBIS practices and procedures will be embedded in classroom management courses at all Rhode Island colleges and universities that offer teacher preparation programs.

3.4 Behavior incidents will decrease in schools implementing SWPBIS.

3.5 Suspensions and expulsions will decrease in schools implementing SWPBIS.

4. To increase the number of highly qualified leadership personnel.

Objectives and Outcomes:

4.1 The requirements for certification as a “Special Education Administrator” will be reviewed and revised.

4.2 The requirements for certification as a “School Principal” will be reviewed and revised.

4.3 Pre-service programs in Rhode Island colleges and universities that prepare teacher candidates for this certificate will be revised. A minimum of six credits related to evidence based practices that improve outcomes for students with disabilities will be added to each program.

4.4 A minimum of six new Special Education Administrators will be mentored each year by experienced administered.

4.5 As a component of the induction process, 25 new principals and/or special education administrators will participate in a “Leadership Series” each year. This series will further acquaint school leaders with resources and with evidence based practices, and will provide a networking opportunity for new school leaders.

4.6 A minimum of 20 family leaders will participate in a “Family Leadership Training Institute” each year.

5. To increase the number of highly qualified new teachers who begin their careers adequately prepared to provide effective instruction to students with disabilities.

Objectives and Outcomes:

5.1 50 quality student teaching sites will be identified. These sites will be selected based on demonstrated use of inclusive practices and collaboration between general education and special education.

5.2 As a component of the induction process, a minimum of 75 new teachers will participate in a three credit year long course focused on implementation of evidence based practices that increase inclusion and increase the positive outcomes achieved by students with disabilities.

5.3 Technical assistance will be provided to new teachers who are employed in schools and school districts that are involved in the RIDE Progressive Supports and Intervention (PSI) system.

5.4 Teachers who participate in both quality student teaching sites and the induction course will use instructional practices that result in (a) an increase in the amount of time students with disabilities participate in the general curriculum and (b) an increase in the number of students who achieve the standard on state assessments.

B. The extent to which the design of the project will address identified needs.

The crosswalk between SPP indicators and project goals provides the most direct evidence. The significance section discusses the connection between identified needs and systemic changes. Each of the goals are discussed at length in the following section.

C. The extent to which the proposed activities constitute a coherent, sustained program of training in the field.

D. The extent to which the project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice.

E. The extent to which the project will establish linkages with other appropriate agencies and organizations.

Goal 1 - To redefine the role of secondary special educators and to increase the number of highly qualified secondary special educators who are practicing in Rhode Island schools.

There are six major components connected to this goal – (a) review and revision of certification requirements; (b) review and revision of pre service training programs in secondary special education; (c) recruitment; (d) development of a non-traditional path to certification; (e) continuing education to already certified secondary special educators; and (f) technical assistance and support to new teachers.

Component 1.1 – Review and Revision of Certification Requirements

The RIDE Office of Educator Quality will convene a workgroup to review requirements for certification as a Special Educator of Students with Mild/Moderate Disabilities in Middle/Secondary schools. Workgroup membership will consist of (a) the Director of the RIDE Office of Teacher Certification, (b) the Director of the RIDE Office of Special Populations, (c) RIDE personnel responsible for secondary special education, (d) representatives from three LEAs, (e) representatives from all colleges and universities that prepare secondary special educators, (f) SPDG personnel, and (g) a representative from the State Special Education Advisory Committee. Review will focus on four issues:

- Expanding the secondary curriculum content requirements for the certificate;
- Possibly requiring secondary certification as the foundation for secondary special education;
- Requiring coursework in collaboration and collaborative decision-making;
- Requiring coursework in transition planning and self determination.

Year 1 will focus on reviewing the literature, analyzing responsibilities of existing RI secondary special educators, and developing recommendations. Once recommendations are finalized, they will be submitted to the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education for formal approval – this includes public hearings. We anticipate the new requirements to be approved by the end of Year 3 and fully implemented by 2011.

The appendix contains a letter from the RIDE Office of Educator Quality committing to this process.

Component 1.2 - Review and Revision of Pre-service Training Programs

There are currently three colleges that offer pre-service preparation of secondary special educators – Rhode Island College, Providence College, Johnson & Wales University. Rhode Island College is partnering with RIDE to implement this project. Department of Special Education faculty and Department of Secondary Education faculty will jointly develop a curriculum proposal. The same four topical issues referenced above will be analyzed. We anticipate recommendations to:

- Require a content area major or the equivalent in general curriculum courses and experiences;
- Revise Special Education 424 (*Assessment, Curriculum, Methodology for Adolescents and Young Adults with Mild/Moderate Disabilities at the Middle/Secondary Level*) to include a significant focus on general curriculum accommodations and on collaborative decision making (e.g., *Applied Collaboration*, as discussed earlier).

- Revise Special Education 427 (*Career Exploration and Vocational Preparation of Adolescents and Young Adults with Mild/Moderate Disabilities at the Middle/Secondary Level*) to focus on transition planning and self determination.
- Revise Special Education 440 (*Home and School Collaboration*) to include discussion of several models for collaborating with general education teachers.
- Insure that student teaching occurs in an inclusive, collaborative setting.

The curriculum proposal will be developed during Year 1 and submitted the College Curriculum Committee for approval during Year 2. The three revised courses will be piloted during Years 2 and 3. Course syllabi will be finalized by 2010.

Mr. Mark Gunning will serve as Adjunct Faculty with a joint appointment in the departments of special education and secondary education. He will facilitate the curriculum review and development process. He will also be the instructor for two of the three courses.

The appendix contains a letter from Dr. Julie Wollman, Dean of the Feinstein School of Education at Rhode Island College. The Feinstein School will partner with RIDE and SPDG personnel to implement these revisions at RICollege. During Years 3 through 5 of the project, the same review will be initiated at Providence College and at Johnson & Wales University.

<p>Component 1.3 – Recruitment</p>

The Sherlock Center has an ongoing statewide recruitment effort. A full time Recruitment Coordinator (with a background in College Admissions) is charged with recruiting candidates for disability related pre-service programs at several colleges and universities. Recruitment efforts are targeted to four groups – (a) high school students with disabilities, (b) family members, (c) persons from minority races and cultures, and (d) paraprofessionals already

working in the field. Last year, the Recruitment Coordinator conducted seven statewide recruitment events attended by 1676 persons; seven events that targeted high school students with disabilities attended by 739 persons; eight events that targeted individuals from diverse races and cultures (including presentations on Latino Radio Cumbre 990 AM) attended by 343 persons; and three events targeted to paraprofessionals attended by 83 persons. In addition, there were several mass mailings, employment fairs, and like events. The Sherlock Center also has a data base that tracks these contacts and assists individuals in the process of applying to colleges and universities. Currently, there are 367 contacts in the data base. 132 persons are matriculated in pre-service programs - (a) 18 students with disabilities, (b) 34 family members, (c) 31 persons from minority races and cultures, and (d) 49 paraprofessionals.

Ms. Kerri Rossi has served in this position and for the past four years as part of the last RI State Improvement Grant. She will continue in this position into the SPDG and will target recruitment into secondary special education.

The primary recruitment tasks include:

Task 1 - Continue outreach effort to recruit Special Education Teacher Assistants in collaboration with the **Teacher Assistant Network**. Develop a brochure describing career opportunities in Special Education and listing the programs offered by each of the participating colleges and universities. The recruitment information will be available in several languages and in alternate formats.

Task 2 – Develop a similar outreach to family members of children with disabilities in collaboration with the state Special Education Advisory Committee, local Special Education Advisory Committees and through the family organizations who are SIG partners.

Task 3 – Outreach to individuals with disabilities and individuals from minority racial and ethnic groups. The Sherlock Center was the home for the Transition Systems Change project. Through this

project, the Sherlock Center developed and continues to maintain a network of Transition Coordinators, family members, and others in **ALL** secondary schools in Rhode Island. This network will be used to recruit potential candidates. Similarly, recruitment materials and requests for names of possible candidates will be disseminated to multicultural organizations in the community. In addition, the Coalition will outreach to high school students from minority groups. Interested students will be assisted to apply for programs such as the Teacher Academy at Mount Pleasant High School in Providence or the Upward Bound program for inner city high school students who are interested in college offered by Rhode Island College.

Task 3 – Provide one-to-one advisement to assist potential candidates with their applications, with securing financial aid, with course selection, and other retention issues.

Task 4 – As these students complete their programs, the Recruitment Coordinator will connect candidates to various job fairs to increase their knowledge of employment opportunities.

<p style="text-align: center;">Component 1.4 - Non-traditional Path to Certification</p>

This activity focuses on the secondary special educators who currently hold emergency certificates. SPDG staff will develop a joint process with the RIDE Office of Educator Quality to evaluate the academic credentials of these teacher candidates and to determine a program of study for them. The plan of study will be written into an “I Plan” that defines the details of professional development for that candidate. Each candidate will be assigned an advisor. Using the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards and the proposed new certification requirements as a guide, the advisor will develop a set of strategies and experiences through which the candidate can meet the Standards and a set of indicators for evaluating the candidate’s performance. These strategies may take the form of existing courses or may be packaged into individual learning experiences for which the

colleges can grant credit. The Higher Education Coordinating Committee and the local school district will explore a mechanism for permitting the teacher candidate to use an extended “emergency position” to meet the requirements of student teaching. Each teacher candidate will compile a portfolio which documents the experience of the candidate, the manner in which the Beginning Teacher Standards indicators were met, and the other competencies the candidate demonstrates. The development of the portfolio will be supervised by the College advisor. 80% of the personnel who now hold emergency certificates will achieve full certification by the end of the SPDG project.

Component 1.5 - Continuing Education to Existing Certified Secondary Special Educators

As stated before, there are more than 1200 existing special educators in RI middle schools and high schools. Many of these teachers do not have the competencies described earlier. Three continuing education (based on the three revised courses) will be developed:

- Transition Planning and Self Determination
- Aligning curriculum and content standards with the individual needs of students
- Collaboration and Collaborative decision making.

Each of these modules will be offered once each year at regional school sites. Mr. Gunning will be the instructor for the first two of these modules and Ms. Abruzinni will be the instructor for the collaboration module. A minimum of 25 teachers will participate in each module each year.

Component 1.6 - Technical Assistance and Support to New Teachers

Goal 5 outlines a series of activities that will assist new teachers through the induction process and will prepare them to more effectively educate students with disabilities in inclusive settings. Targeted technical assistance will be provided to new teachers who are employed in schools and school districts that are receiving interventions through the RIDE Progressive Supports and Interventions system. Technical assistance will focus on implementing the practices described throughout this section.

Goal 2 -To create a professional development system based on the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards.

There are three major components connected to this goal – (a) Rhode Island Early Learning Standards training; (b) development of a cadre of mentors and mentor classrooms; and (c) providing targeted technical assistance and support to four cohorts of participants.

<p>Component 2.1 - Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Training</p>
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The RI Early Learning Standards Project began with the development of *The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards* describing what children should know and be able to do as they leave pre-school and enter kindergarten. Based on current education research and practice, *Rhode Island's Early Learning Standards* include a set of developmentally appropriate goals and expectations for all domains of learning and reflect the priorities of practitioners and families.

The Rhode Island Early Learning Standards are divided into eight **domains**:

- Approaches to Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Language Development and Communication
- Literacy

- Mathematics
- Science
- Creativity
- Physical Health and Development

These domains are organized in a **three-tier structure**:

- *Domains* are general areas of learning.
- *Learning Goals and Definitions* are categories of knowledge and skills within each domain.
- *Expectations* are examples of typical four-year-old behavior that demonstrate competence in relation to each Learning Goal.

Play appears as the first *Learning Goal* in each of the eight domains. The *Early Learning Standards* reflect evidence-based research on how children learn best and Rhode Island's strong belief in the important role of play in how children learn. Through play, children enhance the learning of skills, knowledge and dispositions that guarantees success in later schooling.

Since its inception, the Project has viewed professional development as a key strategy for ensuring that Standards are used in early childhood settings to improve quality and outcomes for young children. Through the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards Project, more than 700 early childhood administrators, teachers, and providers from school districts and community settings have earned certificates and college credit by completing core training to support implementation of a Standards-based program. The 30-45 hours of core training focuses on the following four components of a Standards-based program:

- Aligning Curriculum to the Standards
- Implementing Authentic Assessment Aligned to the Standards
- Supporting ALL Children through Differentiated Teaching and Learning
- Engaging Families

Through this core training, practitioners receive research-based information, reflect on current practice in all four component areas, and establish professional development goals for improving practice over time.

Project personnel (Michelle Palermo and Karen Pucciarelli) will offer four sections of the core training during Year 1. Two sessions of the core training will be offered every year thereafter. Level II training for teachers and Level III training for administrators will be offered once each year.

Component 2.2 - Developing a Cadre of Mentors and Mentor Classrooms

The RI Early Learning Standards Technical Assistance Initiative will build on a pilot project started in Fall of 2006. Districts and community early care and education programs who have demonstrated commitment to implementing a Standards-based program and who are operating inclusive programs will be invited to participate in this Initiative. In order to participate, members of their team will have had to complete the RI Early Learning Standards Training at the administrator (Level III) and/or teacher level (Level II). Priority will be given to districts that have been selected as sample sites for the Outcome Measurement pilot related to the Annual Performance Plan.

Component 2.3 – Targeted Technical Assistance and Supports

Ongoing technical assistance will focus on:

- Building a cadre of expert technical assistance providers
- Designing mentor teacher/mentor classroom protocols

- Establishing policies, procedures, and documentation systems to ensure consistent, high-quality service delivery throughout the duration of the Project

Selected districts or community early care and education programs will receive:

- On-site technical assistance to assist the team in developing a program improvement plan that addresses next steps in implementing standards-based, inclusive practice
- Ongoing training and technical assistance for one year to support program improvement efforts
- Resources and materials to support their program improvement efforts

In exchange, districts and their partners must agree to:

- Provide information and feedback to ELS Project leaders regarding their T/TA experiences
- Share information with other programs by:
 - inviting programs to visit, tour, and talk with staff
 - participating in meetings sponsored by the RI ELS project
- Be available as mentor teachers in mentor classrooms for future cohorts for a period of at least one year

Sample technical assistance focus areas include:

- Aligning Curriculum (program-wide and/or classroom- based)
- Authentic Assessment aligned w/standards
- Differentiated Instruction
- Designing Learning Environments
- Building a mentor-coach system to support implementation of standards

- Developing IEPs aligned with the Standards

The following pages present a detailed plan for implementing the various components of this initiative during the five years of the SPDG.

START-UP PHASE – October, 2007 – September, 2008

	ACTIVITIES	STAFFING, MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT	TIMELINE
Develop tools and strategies to support preschool programs in fully implementing the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify self-assessment tools to be used with district teams to evaluate strengths, determine areas for growth, and develop improvement plans ● Refine the Program Portfolio process and the Practitioner Portfolio Process ● Evaluate pilot data to determine potential areas of technical assistance need and use information to identify expertise of consultants pool ● Develop forms for documenting plan of action and summarizing training and technical assistance services that were delivered 	Project Manager Project Coordinator	Oct '07- Feb '08
Coordinate with RIDE teacher certification office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coordinate intensive professional development with efforts to define highly-qualified teachers in Rhode Island 	Project Manager Project Coordinator	Oct '07- Aug '08
Select, orient, and provide ongoing support to a cadre of expert consultants to deliver on-site technical assistance and mentoring services to administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish qualifications ● Select consultants ● Plan and implement consultant orientation with a focus on: -TA skills such as 	Project Manager Project Coordinator Cadre of Consultants	Dec '07- May '08 and ongoing

<p>and practitioners</p>	<p>process consultation</p> <p>and appreciative inquiry</p> <p>-Supporting program improvement through the Portfolio process</p> <p>-Supporting systems development at the administration level</p> <p>-Supporting teacher practice in the areas of curriculum, assessment, differentiated teaching and learning, and family engagement</p> <p>-Mentoring strategies and reflective supervision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Documentation and record keeping responsibilities of consultants ● Training in Creative Curriculum Outcome Measurement System to be used by participating teachers/administrators ● Establish system for providing ongoing support to consultants that includes multiple strategies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Case management meetings <p>-Consultant meetings</p> <p>-Conference calls</p> <p>-Individualized support</p> <p>-List serves</p>	<p>Guest Speakers</p> <p>Creative Curriculum Assessment Materials</p> <p>Meeting Costs</p> <p>Printing</p>	
<p>Begin to build cadre of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Groom 3 mentor 	<p>Coordinator of</p>	<p>Jan '08-</p>

Mentor teacher/mentor classrooms	teachers/mentor classrooms from pilot project to support Cohort 1	Mentor Teacher/Mentor Classrooms Honorarium for 2 Mentor Teachers	Aug '08
Select and orient Cohort 1 project participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish selection criteria for districts or community early care and education programs • Work with RIDE partners to select districts for participation in each of the four cohorts • Plan and implement orientation to Cohort 1 • Provide Cohort 1 training in outcome measurement system 	Project Manager Project Coordinator Creative Curriculum Assessment Trainer	April '08- June '08

YEAR 1 – October, 2008 - September, 2009

	ACTIVITIES	STAFFING, MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT	TIMELINE
Develop a formalized mentor teacher/mentor classroom program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a manual and training materials to be used with mentor teacher candidates and their administrators • Identify how RI Early Childhood Technical Assistance Project will be incentified and formally recognized by early care and education leaders and the greater community 	Coordinator of Mentor Teacher/Mentor Classrooms	Sept'08- June '09

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select candidates from each cohort for participation in the mentor teacher/mentor classroom program • Engage candidates in the mentor teacher/mentor classroom program • Prepare candidates, their administrators, and their classrooms to serve as mentor teachers/mentor classrooms to future cohorts and to the greater community 		
Provide targeted on-site technical assistance and mentoring to Cohort 1 participants to support the program improvement efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop action plan with each district that includes dates, times, attendees, intended outcomes, and TA approach • Identify consultants to provide TA services • Plan and implement cluster sessions for preschool directors and practitioners with similar professional development needs • Support directors and practitioners in developing program-wide and practitioner level portfolios to document progress in implementing a Standards-based program • Link cohort 1 with 3 mentor teachers 	<p>Lead consultant, case manager for each district</p> <p>Consultants to provide specialized technical assistance in identified areas of need</p>	Sept '08-June '09
Build cadre of mentor teachers/mentor classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select mentor teacher candidates 	Coordinator of Mentor	July '09-August '09

from Cohort 1 participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide mentor teachers with formalized mentor training and ongoing support 	<p>Teacher/Mentor Classrooms</p> <p>Meeting costs</p> <p>Honorarium for mentors</p>	
Select and orient Cohort 2 project participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish selection criteria for districts or community early care and education programs • Work with RIDE partners to select districts for participation in each of the four cohorts • Plan and implement orientation to Cohort 3 • Provide Cohort 3 training in outcome measurement system 	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Project Coordinator</p> <p>Creative Curriculum Assessment Trainer</p>	<p>April '09- June '09</p>
Gather evaluation data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect progress data from Cohort 1 participants (children, teachers, and administrators) 	<p>Preschool Approval Staff</p> <p>Evaluators</p>	<p>June '09</p>

YEAR 2 – October, 2009 - September, 2010

	ACTIVITIES	STAFFING, MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT	TIMELINE
Gather evaluation data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect baseline data from Cohort 2 participants (children, teachers, and administrators) 	<p>Preschool Approval Staff</p> <p>Evaluator</p>	<p>Sept '09</p>
Provide targeted on-site technical assistance and mentoring to Cohort 2 participants to support the program improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop action plan with each district that includes dates, times, attendees, intended 	<p>Lead consultant, case manager for each district</p>	<p>Sept'09-June '10</p>

efforts	<p>outcomes, and TA approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify consultants to provide TA services ● Plan and implement cluster sessions for preschool directors and practitioners with similar professional development needs ● Support directors and practitioners in developing program-wide and practitioner level portfolios to document progress in implementing a Standards-based program ● Link cohort 2 participants with mentor teachers 	Consultants to provide specialized technical assistance in identified areas of need	
Build cadre of mentor teachers/mentor classrooms from Cohort 2 participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Select mentor teacher candidates ● Provide mentor teachers with formalized mentor training and ongoing support 	<p>Coordinator of Mentor Teacher/Mentor Classrooms</p> <p>Meeting costs</p> <p>Honorarium for mentors</p>	July '10- August'10
Select and orient Cohort 3 project participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish selection criteria for districts or community early care and education programs ● Work with RIDE partners to select districts for participation in each of the four cohorts ● Plan and implement orientation to Cohort 3 ● Provide Cohort 3 	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Project Coordinator</p> <p>Creative Curriculum Assessment Trainer</p>	April '10- June '10

	training in outcome measurement system		
Gather evaluation data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect progress data from Cohort 2 participants (children, teachers, and administrators) 	Preschool Approval Staff Evaluators	June '10
YEAR 3 – October, 2008 - September, 2010			
	ACTIVITIES	STAFFING, MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT	TIMELINE
Gather evaluation data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect baseline data from Cohort 3 participants (children, teachers, and administrators) 	Preschool Approval Staff Evaluator	Sept '10
Provide targeted on-site technical assistance and mentoring to Cohort 3 participants to support the program improvement efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop action plan with each district that includes dates, times, attendees, intended outcomes, and TA approach Identify consultants to provide TA services Plan and implement cluster sessions for preschool directors and practitioners with similar professional development needs Support directors and practitioners in developing program-wide and practitioner level portfolios to document progress in implementing a Standards-based program 	Lead consultant, case manager for each district Consultants to provide specialized technical assistance in identified areas of need	Sept'10-June '11

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link Cohort 3 with mentor teachers/mentor classrooms to support ongoing professional development 		
Build cadre of mentor teachers/mentor classrooms from Cohort 3 participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select mentor teacher candidates • Provide mentor teachers with formalized mentor training and ongoing support • Hold meetings to build state-wide network of mentor teachers 	<p>Coordinator of Mentor Teacher/Mentor Classrooms</p> <p>Meeting costs</p> <p>Honorarium for mentors</p>	July '11- August '11
Select and orient Cohort 4 project participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish selection criteria for districts or community early care and education programs • Work with RIDE partners to select districts for participation in each of the four cohorts • Plan and implement orientation to Cohort 4 • Provide Cohort 4 training in outcome measurement system 	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Project Coordinator</p> <p>Creative Curriculum Assessment Trainer</p>	April '11- June '11
Gather evaluation data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect progress data from Cohort 3 participants (children, teachers, and administrators) 	<p>Preschool Approval Staff</p> <p>Evaluators</p>	June '11

YEAR 4 – October, 2011 – September, 2012

	ACTIVITIES	STAFFING, MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT	TIMELINE
Gather evaluation data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect baseline data from Cohort 4 participants (children, teachers, and administrators) 	<p>Preschool Approval Staff</p> <p>Evaluator</p>	Sept '11
Provide targeted on-site technical assistance and mentoring to Cohort 4 participants to support the program improvement efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop action plan with each district that includes dates, times, attendees, intended outcomes, and TA approach Identify consultants to provide TA services Plan and implement cluster sessions for preschool directors and practitioners with similar professional development needs Support directors and practitioners in developing program-wide and practitioner level portfolios to document progress in implementing a Standards-based program Link Cohort 4 participants with mentor teachers/mentor classrooms to support ongoing professional development 	<p>Lead consultant, case manager for each district</p> <p>Consultants to provide specialized technical assistance in identified areas of need</p>	Sept '11-June '12
Build cadre of mentor teachers/mentor classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select mentor teacher 	Coordinator of Mentor	July '12-

from Cohort 4 participants	<p>candidates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide mentor teachers with formalized mentor training and ongoing support • Hold meetings to build state-wide network of mentor teachers 	<p>Teacher/Mentor Classrooms</p> <p>Meeting costs</p> <p>Honorarium for mentors</p>	August '12
Gather evaluation data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect progress data from Cohort 4 participants (children, teachers, and administrators) 	<p>Preschool Approval Staff</p> <p>Evaluators</p>	June '12

CLOSE-OUT ACTIVITIES - 2012

	ACTIVITIES	STAFFING, MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT	TIMELINE
Complete Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile summary of data from each cohort • Prepare final evaluation focused on measurement of two key outcomes related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Improved Outcomes for children with disabilities -Building cadre of ESL trainers and mentor teachers 	Evaluator	July '12
Complete Summary Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesize evaluations summary • List recommendations • Include guidelines for communities 	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Project Coordinator</p> <p>Evaluator</p>	August '12-Sept '12
Institutionalize mentor teacher/mentor classroom system of support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include guidelines for maintaining/growing cadre of mentor teachers • Gather profiles of cadre 	<p>Project Manager</p> <p>Project Coordinator</p>	August '12-Sept '12

	of mentor teachers/mentor classrooms	Design/ Printing	
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3. To decrease the number of behavioral incidents and suspensions and through implementation of a statewide system of School Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS).

The Sherlock Center has been involved with Positive Behavioral Supports for more than 15 years and have had a collaborative relationship with Dr. Rob Horner and Dr. George Sugai, the Co-Directors of the National Technical Assistance Center. Currently, two cohorts of RI schools (42 schools) are implementing SWPBIS. There are four major components connected to this goal – (a) comprehensive training in the SWPBIS model; (b) ongoing technical assistance; (c) developing an instate cadre of SWPBIS trainers, SWIS facilitators, and SET Evaluators; and (d) developing the capacity of RI school districts to implement SWPBIS on a district level.

The appendix includes a letter from Dr. Sugai committing to continued involvement with RI in implementing SWPBIS.

Component 3.1 – Comprehensive Training in SWPBIS

There are three phases to the RI SWPBIS training. First, every spring the Sherlock Center will recruit for a new cohort of schools. An information letter is mailed to every superintendent, every special education administrator, and every school principal. A day long information session is conducted by Dr. Sugai for interested schools. Schools have two months to conduct a series of readiness activities and to provide evidence of their commitment to

implement SWPBIS as one of the major priorities in their school for the next four years. Schools must provide evidence of the following:

- Extensive discussion of SWPBIS with school personnel and with the school’s parent organization;
- A Leadership Team to guide the development and implementation of SWPBIS;
- An internal coach to facilitate SWPBIS activities in the school;
- A commitment that the entire team will attend six days of training in the first year and three days in each of the following three years;
- A commitment to use the *School Wide Information System (SWIS)* to track office referrals and behavior incidents;
- A commitment to permit a *School Evaluation Tool (SET)* Evaluator to evaluate the school annually to determine fidelity of implementation;
- A commitment to have school personnel complete the *Behavior Supports Survey*, the *School Safety Survey*, and the *Team Checklist* to track changes in school climate and staff perceptions;
- The commitment of school and district administrators to provide the in house resources necessary for implementation.

The second phase is the actual training. The SWPBIS model describes three levels of supports and interventions. The first year training (six days) focuses on the “universal level”. Teams develop a set of positive expectations, a teaching matrix, a reinforcement system for students who meet the expectations, and a reinforcement system for staff. The second year focuses on the “targeted level”. Targeted interventions focus on settings or groups (identified through SWIS data). Teams become fluent in strategies for active supervision, for de-escalating

behaviors, etc. The third and fourth years focus on the “intensive level”. These are the interventions designed for individual students. Teams develop school capacity to complete functional behavioral analyses and to design interventions based on these FBA. Schools are given the opportunity to connect to community behavioral health services and to develop the capacity to collaborate with these services in providing wrap around services and supports to individuals and families.

The third phase of training is the “coaches’ training”. Coaches attend a two day summer institute and four sessions during the school year. Coaches are taught to use SET as a rubric to guide their school’s practice. Coaches are taught strategies to facilitate team action planning and implementation.

We anticipate recruiting and training five cohorts of twenty schools during the SPDG project. Thus, by the end of the project, approximately 140 schools (40% of RI schools) will be implementing SWPBIS.

Component 3.2 – Ongoing Technical Assistance

Ongoing technical assistance will be provided in a variety of ways.

- The Sherlock Center SWPBIS Coordinators will provide technical assistance to schools as needed.
- Currently, seven trained SWIS facilitators provide training and follow up to schools that are using SWIS.
- The SET evaluators return to the schools they have evaluated and provide recommendations for continued progress.
- Coaches receive ongoing support through the coach’s institute and quarterly sessions.

Component 3.3 - Developing an instate cadre of SWPBIS trainers, SWIS facilitators, and SET Evaluators

Component 3.4 - Developing the Capacity of RI School Districts to Implement SWPBIS on a District Level

As part of the ongoing strategy to build both statewide capacity and district capacity, the Sherlock Center will:

- Recruit 8 potential trainers, including representatives from higher education, RIDE personnel, and school district personnel. They will attend all the trainings in 2007-2008 for all three cohorts. Dr. Sugai will also spend additional time after each session with the cadre of trainers. They will be the instructors for part of the curriculum in 2008-2009. By 2010, each of the trainers will be able to be the instructor for the whole curriculum.
- The higher education trainers will be the faculty who teach the classroom management courses at Rhode Island College and the University of Rhode Island. They will be expected to embed the content and strategies into their courses.
- Two additional SWIS Facilitators will be trained each summer by the National Center on SWPBIS. Two-thirds of the new facilitators will be district personnel.
- Four additional SET Evaluators will be trained each summer. Half of these will be district personnel.

Goal 4 -To increase the number of highly qualified leadership personnel.

There are five major components connected to this goal – (a) review and revise the requirements for certification as a “Special Education Administrator” and the requirements for certification as a “School Principal”; (b) review and revise pre-service programs in Rhode Island

colleges and universities that prepare teacher candidates for these certificates; (c) develop a mentorship program for special education administrators, (d) develop a family leadership training institute, and (e) provide an ongoing leadership series for school principals and special education administrators.

Note – the appendix contains letters of support and commitment from the RI Association of School Principals (components 4.1, 4.2, 4.5); the Association of Administrators of Special Education (component 4.3); and the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (component 4.4).

Component 4.1 – Review and Revise Certification Requirements

The RIDE Office of Educator Quality will convene a workgroup to review requirements for certification as a “Special Education Administrator” and as a “School Principal”. Workgroup membership will consist of (a) the Director of the RIDE Office of Teacher Certification, (b) the Director of the RIDE Office of Special Populations, (c) RIDE personnel responsible for secondary special education, (d) representatives from three LEAs, (e) representatives from all colleges and universities that prepare secondary special educators, (f) SPDG personnel, and (g) a representative from the State Special Education Advisory Committee.

Possible recommendations will focus on:

- Requiring School Principals to take three credits of special education administration and three credits that highlight implementation of evidence-based practices that improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities;
- Requiring Special Education Administrators to take three credits that highlight implementation of evidence-based practices that improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities.

Component 4.2 – Review and Revise Pre-Service Programs

There are currently three colleges that offer these certificates – Rhode Island College, Providence College, and the University of Rhode Island. Faculty committees at each of these colleges will discuss the issue and develop a proposal to revise their core curriculum. The Rhode Island Association for School Principals will be the facilitator for these discussions.

Component 4.3 – Administrators of Special Education

Mentorship Program for Administrators of Special Education: The RISIG will contract with the Association for Rhode Island Administrators of Special Education to develop a Mentorship Program for aspiring Administrators. RIASP will consult with ARIASE on the development of this program. Three effective Special Education Administrators will be selected by the ARIASE Executive Committee based on nominations from ARIASE Membership, from the State Improvement Grant Partners Group, or from the Leadership Development Coordinating Committee. ARIASE will also solicit applications from aspiring administrators (i.e., teachers, principals, or others who are pursuing certification as an Administrator of Special Education) to be mentored. Each Mentor will support two aspiring administrators. The Mentor will spend two hours each week with the aspiring administrators. The candidates will also complete their required internship with one of the Mentors. The Mentors will receive a stipend of \$6000 per year; that is, the equivalent of teaching two three credit courses at one of the colleges. It will be the responsibility of the Mentor to assist the candidates to obtain certification and to continue to support them in the first two years as an

administrator. This project should result in 6 new administrators each year, a total of 30 for the duration of the SPDG project.

Component 4.4 – Family Leaders

Family Leadership Training Institute: The Family Centered Care Coalition is a collaborative activity of the Parent Support Network, the Rhode Island Parent Information Network, the Sherlock Center, Family Voices, and Parents for Alternative Living. This Coalition sponsors the Family Leadership Training Institute. This Institute offers two training for Family Leaders each year. The first is called “Personal Support Advising” – this 60 hour training discusses strategies for being a resource to other parents and also provides participants with a comprehensive overview of all the service systems and all the resources available in Rhode Island. The second part of the Institute, “Families as Partners in Policy Making”, is also 60 hours and provides participants with strategies for being effective leaders and partners. Any parent involved with either Special Education Advisory Committee or a School Improvement Team in any of the RISIG Target Schools will be invited to participate in these trainings at no cost to them. The cost of course instructors (about 95% of whom are parents) will be supported by the Coalition.

Continuing Support to Family Leaders: As part of its contract with SPDG., RIPIN will provide ongoing technical assistance to the family leadership involved the Special Education Advisory Committee or a School Improvement Team in any of the RISIG Target Schools.

Component 4.5 – Leadership Series

The Rhode Island State Action for Educational Leadership (SAELP) Project is RI’s “Highly Qualified Leaders Project”. SAELP is a collection of activities intended to promote school leaders. A recent survey of school principal recommended the use of mentoring, peer-to-peer networking, and development of practical administrative skills. The Leadership Series grew out of the SAELP conceptual framework. It was instituted three years ago. The following is the list of topics and presenters that comprise the Leadership Series. All ten sessions were overwhelmingly evaluated as “Outstanding” by past cohorts. The feedback given by past cohorts documents the direct impact these programs have had on the administrators in our schools. The series will be offered once each year. Per recommendations from SAELP, this series offers both practical information and an opportunity for networking.

Session 1 – Balanced Leadership in an Age of Accountability:

David Abbott, Associate Commissioner of Education at RIDE, discusses data driven decision making and its effects on schools. He also presents RIDE's functionality framework in a series of documents connecting to a data warehouse where schools can access their own data and streamline information.

John Golden, RIASP Executive Director, presents advice for the novice principal. Areas discussed included school culture, establishing relationships, being visible, and effective communication.

Session 2 - I-Plan for Administrators – Getting Re-certified:

Hilda Potzeba, RIDE Educator Quality & Certification Office gives participants an overview of the necessary steps needed for them to fulfill the requirements for certification renewal.

Session 3 – 504- Do You REALLY Understand What It Means? And The Process for Special Education – The “How” is as Important as the “What”:

David Kane of RIDE and Dr. Thomas DiPaola, Superintendent of Westerly Public Schools, will discuss the difference between 504 plans and IEPs for students; the eligibility requirements for each; correcting misunderstandings concerning a school's responsibilities; and Westerly's unique perspective on special education including RTI.

Session 4 – The School Improvement Process: Using ONE Team to Drive All Changes:

A panel of two School Improvement Teams, one Elementary team from Potter-Burns Elementary School in Pawtucket and a High School team from Chariho Regional High School present how their school cultures, climate, relationships with students and parents, and curriculum and discipline changes all stem from discussion at the SIT meetings.

Session 5 – Special Education View: What You DON'T Know CAN Hurt You:

Andrew Henneous, an education attorney used by many RI school districts, discusses special education law and its impact on the school. He is joined by a school principal and a parent who give their views on meshing special education and regular education students into one student body. RI law concerning discipline regulations, parent and faculty input into meetings, administrative responsibilities and student concerns are discussed.

Session 6 – Working with Adults to Implement Your Agenda for Children:

Attorney Benjamin Scungio provides insight into faculty and student codes for the proper running of a school. State law concerning Progressive Discipline and Past Practice are fully explained.

Session 7 – Home-School Relations: Strategies to Work Effectively with Parents:

A panel consisting of Pat Beauchemin, RI Social Workers Assoc., a member of ARAISE, the Association of Special Educators, and a member of RIASP, discuss the many ways to include parents in the discussion of better schools for children. Ideas to bring more parents into the school and allow more parents a voice in their child's education are presented.

Session 8 – Literacy: Job #1 for Every Educator:

Mary Cerullo, Director of Literacy for the Bristol-Warren School Department presents ways in which principals can monitor literacy in every classroom. Also discussed are ways in which principals can become aware of new strategies into effective literacy programs, including using data to help improve reading scores for every child.

Session 9 – Positive Behavioral Supports – Keeping Student Discipline Positive for Everyone:

Bill Eyman, formally of RIDE, presents strategies designed to students make positive decisions without destroying student self-esteem and morale. Many examples are discussed and participants come away with a complete packet of ideas ready for implementation at their schools.

Session 10 – Communication and Public Relations: From School Report Night to Media Relations:

A Panel consisting of Ms. Barbara Polichetti, Providence Journal beat writer, a building principal, and a member of ARAISE discuss positive steps a principal can take to create a positive relationship with the media. Also discussed is what to do when that unfortunate situation occurs at the school where media coverage is expected.

Goal 5 - To increase the number of highly qualified new teachers who begin their careers adequately prepared to provide effective instruction to students with disabilities.

This goal is connected to the activities of the RIDE Office of Educator Quality. There is evidence that providing supports to new teachers assists them to become more qualified, more knowledgeable and more effective. Strong (2006) documented that beginning teachers who receive comprehensive induction support for two years are more likely to have classes that demonstrate academic gains. Breaux and Wong (2003) documented that induction supports increase the quality of instruction and academic learning. The Rhode Island Teacher Education Renewal (RITER) Project is piloting three strategies – (1) mentoring, (2) school based induction programs, and (3) intensive intervention for teachers employed in schools in need of support. The activities of the SPDG are based on these activities.

However, the SPDG is about increasing the effectiveness of personnel to teach students with disabilities. Therefore, we wanted to target project activities to the needs identified by the SPP indicators; specifically, increasing time in general education, improving performance in the general curriculum, and decreasing the incidence of inappropriate behavior.

There are three core components connected to this goal – (a) selecting quality student teaching sites, (b) adding to existing induction a course that highlights how to implement evidence-based practices that improve outcomes for students with disabilities, and (c) providing technical assistance to new teachers employed in schools that are involved with Progressive Supports and Interventions. These three components provide a continuum of experiences.

Component 5.1 – Quality Student Teaching Sites

Less than 50% of RICollege teacher candidates complete their student teaching in quality inclusive settings in which general educators and special educators collaborate to align curriculum content with the individual needs of students. SPDG Adjunct Faculty (Ms. Deb Abruzzini) will assist the RICollege Office of Clinical Experiences to identify quality student teaching sites. Ms. Abruzzini will solicit recommendations from college faculty, special education administrators, teachers, and others. Using a rating rubric, she will visit recommended classes to determine if they demonstrate effective and inclusive programs for students with disabilities. RICollege, as a SPDG partner, has committed to use these sites.

Component 5.2 – Course Highlighting Effective Practices

A course will be developed during Fall, 2007 and piloted in Spring, 2008. The course will target the strategies described throughout this narrative:

- A set of strategies for aligning curriculum content with individual needs;
- Collaborative decision making;
- Collaboration between general education and special education;
- SWPBIS.

Beginning in Fall, 2008 the course will be offered as a monthly series – as with the Leadership Series, this will also serve as networking opportunity for new teachers. A minimum of three sections of the course will be offered each year. Ms. Abruzzini will be the primary developer and instructor.

Component 5.3 – Technical Assistance

Targeted technical assistance will be provided to new teachers who are employed in schools and school districts that are receiving interventions through the RIDE Progressive Supports and Interventions system. Technical assistance will focus on implementing the practices described throughout this section.

IV. Quality of Project Personnel

A. Extent to which applicant encourages applications from members of groups that have been traditionally underrepresented.

Both RIDE and Rhode Island College/Sherlock Center have aggressive affirmative action policies. Searches for all new positions are conducted under those policies. Positions must be advertised in the public media (newspapers, R.I. College web site, etc.) and must be circulated to a comprehensive list of multicultural organizations and organizations that support individuals with disabilities. The Search Committee must interview at least one candidate from a protected class, including individuals who have disabilities. These policies have resulted in an increase in the number of candidates and new personnel from underrepresented groups. For example, the Sherlock Center has hired eight new employees in the past year, three of whom are members of minority groups and one has a disability. It is also important to note that 40% of the Sherlock Center's employees are parents of children with disabilities.

B. Qualifications of Key Project Personnel

Vitae for all key project personnel can be found in Appendix B. The following paragraphs will highlight the qualifications of the core personnel.

Mr. Kenneth Swanson is the Director of the RIDE Office of Special Populations. He has more than 25 years experience in Special Education as a teacher and administrator. Mr. Swanson will provide administrative oversight at RIDE. Dr. Tony Antosh is the founder and Director of the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities at Rhode Island College, Rhode Island's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. He is also Professor of Special Education responsible for undergraduate and graduate students being prepared to teach students with severe disabilities. Dr. Antosh has thirty-eight years of experience with individuals who have severe disabilities in a variety of positions ranging from direct support staff to administration. He has authored and managed more than fifty grants. DR. Antosh will provide administrative oversight at the Sherlock Center.

Mr. Jonathan Dyson served as the RISIG Coordinator for the past five years. Mr. Dyson has more than 30 years of experience in the field, including 16 years as Administrator of Special Education and Personnel Director for a local school district. Mr. Dyson also has a M.Ed. in Educating Students with Serious Emotional Disturbances and was a co-founder, Department Chair and teacher at an alternative school in Florida. He has been involved in the SWPBIS initiative sponsored by the Sherlock Center for the past 3 years and has provided and facilitated several of the initiative's training components. Mr. Dyson will commit .70 FTE to this project. He will be the overall Project Coordinator. He also has specific responsibilities in the Leadership goal and the SWPBIS goal.

Dr. George Sugai, Co-Director of the National Technical Assistance Center on School Wide Positive Behavioral Supports, has committed to continue to work with the Sherlock Center in implementing the SWPBIS components of this project. Dr. Sugai will be the principal instructor for the first two years of this project and provide intermittent instruction after that.

Mark Gunning has been a Master Teacher for Transition at the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities since 2003 and has served in the capacity of Statewide Transition Coordinator for Rhode Island middle and secondary schools. His transition capacity-building/systemic change duties include development of transition teacher- training programs, teacher training, facilitation of transition outcome data collection, newsletter writing, facilitation of LEA self-study of high school transition programming, transition board/council participation, and liaison for transition with the Rhode Island Department of Education (Office of Special populations). Prior to his work at the Sherlock Center, Mr. Gunning was the Transition Specialist/Coordinator for the Narragansett School System, Narragansett, Rhode Island, from 1996-2003. In that capacity, he developed a transition, work-based learning program for students with disabilities, grades 9-12, establishing school/employer partnerships with 120 businesses. Additional educational experiences during his 30-year career in education include: Director of Special Education; Special Educator, grades K-12; General Educator, English, middle/secondary; General Educator, elementary. Mr. Gunning holds MA from Northwestern University in Learning Disabilities/Communicative Disorders (1981). He completed his PhD course of studies at Northwestern University with a cognate in Clinical Psychology and was admitted to candidacy/ABD in 1984. Mr. Gunning will serve as the Adjunct Faculty charhed with facilitating most of the activities in Goal 1.

Mrs. Deborah Abruzzini has served as the Master Teacher providing technical assistance and professional development for low performing elementary schools in the RISIG for the past five years. Mrs. Abruzzini is a National Board Certified Teacher in Special Education who has 19+ years experience in the field. Mrs. Abruzzini has served as an Adjunct Professor of Special Education at Rhode Island College for 2 years teaching courses in differentiation for special

needs students. While serving as the elementary Master Teacher for the RISIG, Mrs. Abruzzini has provided professional development in the areas of accommodations and modifications, inclusion, classroom PBIS and collaborative teaching. Ms. Abruzzini has responsibilities to provide instruction re: collaboration (Goals 2 & 5), to identify quality student teaching sites (Goal 5), to develop and implement the course for new teachers (Goal 5), and to provide technical assistance targeted to teachers in schools that are receiving interventions through the RIDE PS&I system.

Ms. Kerri Rossi has been the Sherlock Center Recruitment Coordinator for the past five years. She has a background in college recruiting and college admissions. She has responsibility for the recruitment activities described in the narrative.

Michele Palermo, RIDE *Coordinator of Early Childhood Initiatives*, will be the Project Manager for the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards component of this project. Ms. Palermo oversees initiatives and activity related to early education for all children at the RI Department of Education. She is responsible for ensuring that preschool special education is integrated into the larger strategic plan for early education. Ms. Palermo represents the RI Department of Education in coordinating state-level policies and systems development with other state agencies and community constituencies related to early childhood issues. She also provides leadership, on-going management, project development, and quality improvement for the statewide RI Early Learning Standards Initiative. Ms. Palermo has more than 13 years experience as a teacher in early childhood classrooms and holds state certification in both regular and special education. She will be responsible for the overall management of the RI Early Learning Standards Technical Assistance Initiative.

Karen Pucciarelli is the Coordinator of the RI Early Learning Standards Project. Mrs. Pucciarelli has been Coordinator of the RI Early Learning Standards Project since 2004. She works with an inter-departmental Steering Committee to plan and implement RIELS Project activities to improve program quality and outcomes for children through coordination with state-level initiatives, professional development, and technical assistance. Under her leadership, the RIELS Project has expanded and refined its professional development activities. Mrs. Pucciarelli has extensive experience in the area of technical assistance delivery. She will be responsible for daily coordination of RI Early Learning Standards Technical Assistance Initiative activities.

V. Adequacy of Resources

Two organizations share responsibility for managing this project. The RIDE Office of Special Populations is the primary recipient of the grant and will provide oversight and fiscal reporting. RIDE OSP is the IDEA Part B agency for Rhode Island. One of the RIDE staff, Ms. Palermo, will have specific responsibilities for oversight of the Early Learning Standards component of the project.

The Paul V. Sherlock Center (as described in the budget) will be a subcontractor for the project and will manage most of the activities. The Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities was founded in 1993 through a competitive peer review process. The Sherlock Center is part of a national network of **67 University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities**. This network is administered through the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Each UCEDD is charged with five core functions – interdisciplinary training, outreach training and technical assistance, information dissemination, and research. During the 2005 fiscal year,

4231 persons participated in Sherlock Center trainings or conferences; 11,532 persons received technical assistance; 39 products or publications were disseminated to 29,975 recipients; and 3480 persons received direct service. 8% of all participants in Sherlock Center activities were individuals with disabilities and 23% were family members. 68% of participants were professionals or paraprofessionals working in a disability related field.

The mission of the Sherlock Center is to “promote the participation of individuals with disabilities in school, work, and society”. The Sherlock Center has several areas of emphasis. These include: (a) providing technical assistance and support to families in which a family member has a disability; (b) promoting quality transition from early intervention to school; (c) promoting inclusive practices and access to the general curriculum for all students; (d) providing technical assistance and service to children with low incidence disabilities, including children who are blind and visually impaired and children who are deaf-blind; (e) providing educational advocacy on behalf of children with disabilities who are in the custody of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, Families; (f) promoting effective transition from school to adult life; (g) promoting meaningful employment; (h) promoting quality adult services; (i) promoting the effective use of assistive technology; (j) promoting the implementation of positive behavioral supports and interventions; and (k) providing pre service training and outreach training to professionals and paraprofessionals who provide Early Intervention, Education, Employment, and Adult Support.

The Sherlock Center currently has 58 employees. The Sherlock Center has collaborative activities with five colleges and universities, four departments of state government, and several private organizations. During the 2005 fiscal year, more than 80% of the school districts and

human service organizations in Rhode Island received technical assistance and/or training from the Sherlock Center. The Sherlock Center is primarily supported through grants and contracts from federal, state, and private sources.

Several partners are involved with project activities. The roles and responsibilities of these partners are described in the Project Design and in the Management Plan. The goals to which each partner is connected is summarized below:

Dr. George Sugai, National TA Center on SWPBIS	Goal 3
Rhode Island College, Feinstein School of Education	Goals 1, 4, 5
RIDE Office of Educator Quality	Goals 1, 4, 5
RI Association of School Principals	Goal 4
Association of RI Administrators of Special Education	Goal 4
RI Parent Information Network	Goal 4
RI Department of Human Services (Part C)	Goal 2
RI Department of Health	Goal 2.

The Budget Narrative describes the costs associated with this proposal. A five year budget is also presented – the only increases in the annual budgets are for projected salary and benefit increases. Note that the budget essentially has two sections – (1) RIDE expenses and (2) expenses that are part of the Sherlock Center subcontract.

VI. Management Plan

A. Major Tasks, Responsibilities, Timelines

The chart on the following pages presents an overview of the major components connected to each goal, the primary tasks, persons responsible, and timelines.

Goals and Activities	Major Tasks	Responsibility	Timelines				
			07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12
Project Administration	Convene SPDG Leadership Team	J. Dyson	monthly	→	→	→	→
	Convene SPDG Partners Group	J. Dyson	quarterly	→	→	→	→
	Formalize contracts with SPDG Partners	J. Dyson	10/07				
	Annual Report to SPDG Partners Group	J. Dyson	5/08	5/09	5/10	5/11	5/12
	Annual Performance Reports	J. Dyson	5/08	5/09	5/10	5/11	5/12
Goal 1							
Certification Review	Workgroup analysis and recommendations	RIDE – Teacher Certification	6/08				
	Board of Regents Approval	RIDE, Regents			6/10		
	Implementation	RIDE				→	→
Pre-Service Review	Curriculum Development	RIC	6/08				
	Curriculum Approval	RIC		6/09			
	Pilot three revised courses	M. Gunning, others		→	→		
	Ongoing implementation					→	→
	Curriculum Review at PC, J&W				→	→	→
Recruitment	Outreach to target groups	K. Rossi	ongoing				
	One-to-one advisement of candidates	K. Rossi	ongoing				
	Provide info about job fairs, etc.	K. Rossi	ongoing				
Non-Traditional	Review of credentials	RIDE	ongoing				
	Development of I Plans	RIDE & Advisor	ongoing				
	Candidates achieve certification	Candidates	ongoing				

Continuing Education	Development of three modules	M. Gunning D. Abruzinni	6/08					
	Each module taught once each year	M. Gunning D. Abruzinni		→	→	→	→	
Technical Assistance	TA to new teachers in PS&I schools	M. Gunning D. Abruzinni		→	→	→	→	
Goal 2	see chart in Project Design							
Goal 3								
Comprehensive Training	Recruit schools	J. Dyson	3/08	3/09	3/10	3/11	3/12	
	Schools demonstrate commitment	Schools	5/08	5/09	5/10	5/11	5/12	
	Team Training	G. Sugai	ongoing	→	→	→	→	
	Coaches Training	J. Dyson	ongoing	→	→	→	→	
Technical Assistance	SWIS Facilitation	Facilitators	ongoing	→	→	→	→	
	SET Evaluation and Follow Up	Evaluators	ongoing	→	→	→	→	
Developing Cadre of Trainers	Select Trainers	J. Dyson	10/07					
	Attend all trainings for one year		ongoing	→	→	→	→	
	Begin to train	Trainers		10/09				
	SWIS Facilitator Training	G. Sugai	8/07	8/08				
	SET Evaluator Training	J. Dyson	8/07	8/08	8/09	8/10	8/11	
Develop District Capacity	Recruit districts	J. Dyson	8/07					
	Trainers (as above) from each district							

SWIS Facilitators (as above)

SET Evaluators (as above)

Goal 4

Certification Review

Workgroup analysis and recommendations

RIDE – Teacher Certification

6/08

Board of Regents Approval

RIDE, Regents

6/10

Implementation

RIDE

→ →

Pre-Service Review

Curriculum Development at RIC

RIC

6/08

Curriculum Approval at RIC

RIC

6/09

Curriculum Review at PC, URI

PC, URI

6/10

Mentorship for SE administrators

Select mentors

ARIASE

9/08 9/09 9/10 9/11 9/12

Match new administrators with mentors

ARIASE

9/08 9/09 9/10 9/11 9/12

Monitor progress

ARIASE

ongoing → → → →

Family Leadership Institute

Schedule trainings

RIPIN

ongoing → → → →

Support to Advisory Committee Leaders

RIPIN

ongoing → → → →

Leadership Series

Schedule sessions

RIASP

9/08 9/09 9/10 9/11 9/12

Implement training series

RIASP

ongoing → → → →

Goal 5

Identify Student Teaching Sites

Solicit recommendations

D. Abruzzini

every Fall

Visit recommended sites

D. Abruzzini

every Fall

	Use approved sites as placements	RIC	ongoing	→	→	→	→
Course	Develop syllabus	D. Abruzzini	Fall/07				
	Pilot Course		Spring, 08				
	Three sections annually	D. Abruzzini	→	→	→	→	
Technical Assistance	Identify targeted sites	D. Abruzzini	Every Fall				
	Provide supports	D. Abruzzini	ongoing	→	→	→	→

B. Ensure Diversity of Perspectives

Project Management will occur at three levels. First, the Project Management Team will consist of those persons with specific administrative responsibilities within RIDE and the Sherlock Center. These will include:

Kenneth Swanson	Director, RIDE Office of Special Populations
Paulajo Gaines	Director, RIDE Office of Educator Quality
Mary Connole	Director, RIDE Progressive Supports and Interventions
Barrie Grossi	RIDE, Personnel Development
Michelle Palermo	RIDE, Early Childhood
Tony Antosh	Director, Sherlock Center
Jonathan Dyson	Project Coordinator

The Project Management Team will meet monthly.

Second, the Partners Group will serve as the Project Advisory Committee. The Partners Group includes representation from ARIASE; RIASP; three colleges (RI College, the University of Rhode Island, Providence College); two parent organizations (RIPIN, Parent Support Network); three school districts; three state agencies (Children, Youth, Families; Health; Human Services – Part C and Rehabilitation Services); and the State Special Education Advisory Committee. The Partners Group will meet quarterly.

Third, Ken Swanson, Tony Antosh, Jonathan Dyson will meet with the State Special Education Advisory Committee every six months. Evaluation data will be shared with both the Partners Group and the SEAC. Each group will discuss revisions to the goals and scope of work.

VII. Project Evaluation

Modified logic models are attached for each of the five goals. Each logic model outlines (a) the core activities, (b) the outputs expected from those activities, and (c) the outcomes and the strategies for measuring those outcomes.

There are three levels of evaluation questions contained in these logic models:

First Level – Formative Evaluation

Evaluation Questions:

- Did the activities occur?
- Where the participants satisfied with the activities? How would they revise them?
- Were there any barriers to completing the activities? How were they overcome?
- Were there any themes or experiences worth noting.

Methodology:

- Activity Logs maintained by the project participants.
- Participant interviews – including members of the Management Team and the Partners Group.

Second Level – Output Tracking

Evaluation Questions:

- How many trainings or technical assistance sessions occurred?
- How many participants?
- Who were the participants?
- Were the certification requirements revised?
- Was the pre-service curriculum revised? Were courses developed?
- How many mentors were developed.

Methodology:

- Registration information maintained by the various partners;
- Document Review of certification requirements, pre-service curriculum, course syllabi, etc.

Third Level – Outcome Measurement

This is the critical element of this plan. Has the system changed? Have teachers changed? Have students changed?

Evaluation Questions:

- Has the number of highly qualified secondary educators increased?
- Do they demonstrate use of evidence-based practices in their classrooms?
- Are there more RIELS mentor teachers?
- Are there more quality early learning sites?
- Is SWPBIS changing the culture of participating schools?
- Do new teachers who participate in the induction activities demonstrate use of evidence-based strategies in their classrooms?
- Has there been positive change in the APR indicators? More time in the general classroom? More students achieving the standard on state assessments? Less suspensions? Decreases in the incidence of behavior? Quality transition plans? More students graduating with a regular diploma? More graduates employed or in post secondary education two years after graduation?

Methodology:

Three types of methods are used at this level.

- This project begins and ends with the SPP indicators....so the primary tool for analyzing changes in outcomes will be to examine the APR data collected by RIDE and look for changes that are statistically significant. We recognize that RIDE has not yet collected baseline for some of the newer indicators. We will also report both composite data for the state AND disaggregated data for the schools involved with project.
- There are specific measures that were developed for specific purposes – e.g., *SWIS* to measure the incidence of behavior in SWPBIS schools, the use of *Creative Curriculum Assessments* to measure outcomes in preschool children, the use of Educational Programs for Young Children Approval Standards to determine quality early learning sites.
- Observation protocols will be developed early in Year 1 to be used when observing the sample of new teachers and the sample of secondary special educators. These protocols will be based on the evidence based practices described throughout the narrative.

All of the data collection will be done annually and will follow the data collection schedule associated with the APR. Any data not specifically associated with the APR will be collected in June. As discussed earlier, all data will be discussed with both the Partners Group and the SEAC. Data collection and analysis will be supervised by an external third party evaluator (selected through a bid process). Annual reports will be the joint responsibility of the Evaluator and the Project Coordinator.

Logic Model – Goal 1

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) review and revision of certification requirements; (b) review and revision of pre service training programs in secondary special education; (c) recruitment; (d) development of a non-traditional path to certification; (e) continuing education to existing teachers; (f) technical assistance and support to new teachers 	<p>Activity Log</p> <p>Participant Interviews</p>
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) certification requirements will be revised; (b) pre-service training programs will be revised (c) 10 non-traditional candidates each year will achieve full certification through I-Plans; (d) 25 new students will be recruited into pre-service programs – 30% of these from minority cultures and races; (e) 75 teachers will participate in continuing education; (f) Teachers in PS&I districts will receive technical assistance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Document Review (b) Document Review (c) Certification Records (d) Contact Log maintained by Recruitment Coordinator (e) Sherlock Center registration information (f) Sherlock Center tracking
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the number of highly qualified secondary special educators will increase; (b) teachers will demonstrate the use of evidence-based practices; (c) more students will (1) achieve the standard on state assessments, (2) graduate from high school with a diploma, (3) participate actively in transition planning, (4) have quality transition plans, (5) be employed or in post secondary education two years after graduation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Certification Records (b) Classroom Observation of a 10% random sample of project participants

Logic Model – Goal 2		
Activities	(a) Rhode Island Early Learning Standards training; (b) development of a cadre of mentors and mentor classrooms; (c) providing targeted technical assistance and support to four cohorts	Activity Log Participant Interviews
Outputs	(a) 4 sessions of RIELS training offered during Year 1; (b) 2 sessions of RIELS core training offered each year during Years 2 – 5; (c) number of trainers; (d) number of mentor classrooms; (e) number of early childhood personnel who receive RIELS training or technical assistance	(a) Sherlock Center registration information (a) Sherlock Center registration information (c) RIELS data base (d) RIELS data base (e) Sherlock Center registration information
Outcomes	(a) a network of 20 mentor teachers will exist to provide professional development and technical assistance; (b) 40 quality early learning sites will exist; (c) children with disabilities (a) will spend increasing amounts of time with typical peers, and (b) will demonstrate increasingly positive outcomes in the APR.	(a) RIELS data base (b) Educational Programs for Young Children Approval Standards; interviews (c) Creative Curriculum Assessment System

Logic Model – Goal 3

<p style="text-align: center;">Activities</p>	<p>(a) comprehensive training in the SWPBIS model; (b) ongoing technical assistance; (c) developing an instate cadre of SWPBIS trainers, SWIS facilitators, and SET Evaluators; (d) developing the capacity of RI school districts to implement SWPBIS on a district level.</p>	<p>Activity Log</p> <p>Participant Interviews</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Outputs</p>	<p>(a) 50% of Rhode Island elementary schools and 25% of middle and secondary schools will implement SWPBIS by the end of the project. (b) 80% of these schools will implement SWPBIS with fidelity, as indicated by an 80% criterion on the <i>School Evaluation Tool (SET)</i>. (c) SWPBIS practices and procedures will be embedded in classroom management courses at all Rhode Island colleges and universities that offer teacher preparation programs.</p>	<p>(a) Sherlock Center SWPBIS data base</p> <p>(b) School Evaluation Tool (SET)</p> <p>(c) Document Review of course syllabi</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Outcomes</p>	<p>(a) Behavior incidents will decrease in schools implementing SWPBIS. (b) Suspensions will decrease in schools implementing SWPBIS.</p>	<p>(a) School Wide Information System (SWIS) (b) RIDE APR</p>

Logic Model – Goal 4

Activities	<p>(a) develop a mentorship program for special education administrators,</p> <p>(b) develop a family leadership training institute,</p> <p>(c) provide an ongoing leadership series for school principals and special education administrators</p>	<p>Activity Log</p> <p>Participant Interviews</p>
Outputs	<p>(a) The requirements for certification as a “Special Education Administrator” will be reviewed and revised.</p> <p>(b) The requirements for certification as a “School Principal” will be reviewed and revised.</p> <p>(c) Pre-service programs in Rhode Island colleges and universities that prepare teacher candidates for this certificate will be revised</p> <p>(d) A minimum of six new Special Education Administrators will be mentored each year by experienced administered.</p> <p>(e) As a component of the induction process, 25 new principals and/or special education administrators will participate in a “Leadership Series” each year.</p> <p>(f) A minimum of 20 family leaders will participate in a “Family Leadership Training Institute” each year.</p>	<p>(a) Document Review</p> <p>(b) Document Review</p> <p>(c) Document Review – RI College Curriculum Committee</p> <p>(d) ARIASE data base</p> <p>(e) Sherlock Center registration information</p> <p>(f) RIPIN registration information</p>
Outcomes	<p>(a) students will be increasingly educated in the general classroom;</p> <p>(b) performance on state assessments will improve;</p> <p>(c) behavioral incidents and suspensions will decrease.</p>	<p>(a) RIDE Census – APR</p> <p>(b) InfoWorks – RIDE – APR</p> <p>(c) RIDE APR</p>

Logic Model – Goal 5		
Activities	<p>(a) selection of quality student teaching sites,</p> <p>(b) adding to existing induction a course that highlights how to implement evidence-based practices that improve outcomes for students with disabilities,</p> <p>(c) providing technical assistance to new teachers employed in schools that are involved with PS&I</p>	<p>Activity Log</p> <p>Participant Interviews</p>
Outputs	<p>(a) 50 quality student teaching sites will be identified.</p> <p>(b) As a component of the induction process, a minimum of 75 new teachers will participate in a three credit year long course focused on implementation of evidence based practices that increase inclusion and increase the positive outcomes achieved by students with disabilities.</p> <p>(c) New teachers who are employed in schools and school districts that are involved in the RIDE Progressive Supports and Intervention (PSI) system will receive technical assistance.</p>	<p>(a) RI College data base</p> <p>(b) Sherlock Center registration information</p> <p>(c) Sherlock Center tracking</p>
Outcomes	<p>(a) Teachers who participate in both quality student teaching sites and the induction course will use instructional practices that result in (1) an increase in the amount of time students with disabilities participate in the general curriculum and (2) an increase in the number of students who achieve the standard on state assessments.</p> <p>(b) students will be increasingly</p>	<p>(a) Classroom observation of random 10% sample of participants</p> <p>(b) RIDE Census – APR</p>

	educated in the general classroom; (c) performance on state assessments will improve; (d) behavioral incidents and suspensions will decrease	(c) Infoworks – RIDE – APR (d) RIDE data base - APR
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