EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION FOR EARLY LEARNING COLLABORATIVES AND OTHER PRE-K CLASSROOMS SCHOOL YEAR 2016-2017

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Overview

The National Association for the Education of Young Children describes a high-quality program as "providing a safe, nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children while responding to the needs of families." Criteria that further describe a high quality program are included in *Appendix A* of this document.

Schools providing services to pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) aged children receive an annual evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of services on improving children's learning and well-being. Evaluation occurs for the Early Learning Collaboratives (collaborative) and other Pre-K classrooms (e.g. Title I, local-funded, tuition-based) in Mississippi public schools. Evaluation consists of two parts: rate of readiness and monitoring.

The rate of readiness is a score assigned to each site through completion of specific tools that assess how children grow academically and developmentally throughout a school year and how the classroom environment and teaching practices support children's learning. The tools that factor into the site score will be implemented in phases, so all Pre-K classrooms will have time to prepare. Collaborative classrooms have an expedited timeframe for implementation, because of the effectiveness evaluation criteria established by the *Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2013*.

A site score is comprised of the sum of sub scores from the following tools for collaborative classrooms:
- The Mississippi K-3 Assessment Support System (MKAS[2]) (25 points)
- Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment (CELA) (25 points)
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) (50 points)

A site score for other Pre-K classrooms will be a baseline measure of performance and no probationary action will be taken if districts do not meet the targets. The site score for the district will be determined through the MKAS[2].

Monitoring is a process where evidence is provided to ensure compliance with grant requirements, *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Classrooms Serving Three- and Four-Year-Olds*, and/or best practices in early childhood.

Rate of Readiness

Assessing services for improving children's learning and well-being is complex because of the multitude of factors that influence children's growth and development. Therefore, a site score will be comprised from multiple measures to provide a more thorough assessment. A committee has decided on the ranges that correlate to the points assigned for calculation of the rate of readiness score.

The final rate of readiness site score breakdown is shown in *Table I* for early learning collaboratives.

Table I
Site score breakdown by assessment tool:

A.	MKAS² Scoring Average percent of district school site children meeting 498	Percentage of children that meet 498 by the end of the year	0-29% = 0 points 30-49% = 8 points 50-65% = 15 points 66-100% = 25 points
		OR	**OR**
		Percent of children that demonstrate an average point gain of 98 per site	0-24% = 0 points 25-39% =8 points 40-49% = 15 points 50-100% = 25 points
B.	CELA	To be determined based on the comprehensive early learning assessments selected.*	**Up to 25 points**
C.	CLASS Ranges • Low = 1 – 2 • Mid = 3 – 5 • High = 6 – 7	Average across domains **plus** performance on Instructional Support (IS) domain if site average is 5.00 or higher	1.00-2.99 = 0 points 3.00-3.99 = 15 points 4.00-4.99 = 30 points 5.00-7.00 & <2.8 IS = 30 points 5.00-7.00 & ≥2.8 IS = 50 points
			Site Score (A+B+C)

Rate of Readiness Determination

Based on the site score achieved, the rate of readiness is assigned. The point breakdown for the rate of readiness is as follows:

- **Successful:** site score of 70+ points
- **Probation:** site score of 69 points and below (The first year in this category initiates a one year probationary period. After the first probationary year, the partner site has to score 70 + points to continue funding.)
- **Non-eligible:** site score of 69 and below and has been on probation for one year

A. Collaborative Rate of Readiness

It is expected that each site within a collaborative would achieve a successful score. If a site does not meet the criteria for a successful score, the site will move into a probationary period. During the probationary year, the program will develop a plan for improvement and receive technical assistance to support growth. If the probationary year is complete and the site still does not achieve a successful score, then the program becomes non-eligible for collaborative funding. If a collaborative lead site moves into the second year of probation and becomes non-eligible, then another eligible partner site will take over as the lead program.

B. Other Pre-K Classroom Rate of Readiness

School districts will not receive a rate of readiness determination for this school year. Instead the site score for the district will provide a baseline for professional development and growth within the district for the following school year.

Monitoring

Early Learning Collaborative Monitoring

All sites will receive a monitoring visit at least once during the school year between November and May. Representatives from the MDE will utilize the *Early Learning Collaborative Monitoring Tool*.

Other Pre-K Classroom Monitoring

The Office of Accreditation will complete monitoring visits in other Pre-K classrooms on a cyclical schedule. During the onsite visits, Standard 17.2: Pre-K Audit Checklist would be utilized.

Effectiveness Evaluation at a Glance for Future Years

Effective with the 2017-2018 school year, the use of a Comprehensive Early Learning Assessment (CELA) will be included as part of the site score.

Site readiness scores will be determined as outlined in *Table II*.

Table II
Site score calculation by school year:

	2017-2018
Collaborative Classrooms	• MKAS^2 (25 points) • CELA (25 points) • CLASS (50 points)
Other Pre-K Classrooms	• MKAS^2 (25 points) • CELA (25 points) • CLASS (50 points)

Monitoring will continue as previously completed for collaboratives. Other Pre-K classrooms, including special education classrooms, will be monitored on a cyclical schedule using the appropriate *Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards* monitoring checklist as well as the *Early Learning Collaborative Monitoring Tool*.

Appendix A: High Quality Early Childhood Program Definition

The National Association for the Education of Young Children describes a high-quality program as "providing a safe, nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children while responding to the needs of families." This definition provides the foundation of the criteria below.

1. **Family and Community Engagement**
   A high quality early childhood program fosters a sense of community within its doors and connects families to resources and opportunities in the surrounding community. This sense of community is created through open communication with understanding and respect for the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and languages of families. Programs engage the community by utilizing local resources to support child development.

2. **Observation and Assessment**
   A high quality early childhood program uses an ongoing cycle of observation and assessment as an analysis of a child's growth and development. Results are used to plan and modify instruction, and are shared with families. Partners and resources are sought to address identified needs and provide additional opportunities.

3. **Environment and Curriculum**
   A high quality early childhood program provides an environment designed for children. This learning environment is characterized by supportive relationships and conversations that foster language development. The environment is strengthened by curriculum and materials that engage children in developmentally appropriate activities that address all domains of development (social/emotional, language, cognition and general knowledge, physical well-being and motor development).

4. **Health, Safety and Nutrition**
   A high quality early childhood program protects the physical, social, and emotional safety of a child. It promotes the care of the whole child through healthy relationships and habits, including nutrition, hygiene, and physical activity. It provides information about and access to regular health screenings, interventions, and referrals as needed.

5. **Faculty and Staff**
   A high quality early childhood program employs educators that have the knowledge and training to make informed decisions. These educators have experience in the field and are engaged in continuous learning. Staff engage in ethical conduct and maintain a positive disposition and a sense of empathy.

6. **Administration and Leadership**
   A high quality early childhood program is led by administrators with an understanding and appreciation for the unique needs of their program, including regulatory requirements, communication strategies, and management plans. They implement

program policies to foster a child's growth and development, and advocate for children and their families. They engage in strong business practices that attract and sustain resources, and create an accessible, affordable program.

7. **<u>Evaluation</u>**

A high quality early childhood program receives an annual evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of services on improving children's learning and well-being. Evaluation consists of two parts: rate of readiness and monitoring. The rate of readiness is a score assigned to each site through completion of specific evaluation tools that assess how children grow academically and developmentally throughout a school year and how the classroom environment and teaching practices support children's learning. Monitoring is a process where evidence is provided to ensure compliance with grant requirements, *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Classrooms Serving Three- and Four-Year-Olds*, and/or best practices in early childhood.