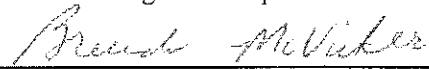
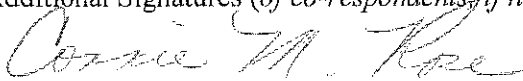


WRITTEN STATEMENT OF COUNTY READINESS

Instructions: Your written statement may not exceed **eight (8)** single spaced pages. Additional pages will not be reviewed or considered. A copy of the language of HEA 1004 may be found on the [website](#) of the Indiana General Assembly. An authorized representative for the respondent *and any co-respondents* must sign this cover page.

RESPONDENT INFORMATION	
County: Grant	
Legal Name: Marion Community Schools	Mailing Address: 750 W. 26th St. Marion, IN 46953
Contact Name: Brenda McVicker Contact Title: Director of Elementary Ed. (Single point of contact for communication)	Contact Phone: 765-677-4581 Contact Email Address: bmcvicker@marion.k12.in.us
COUNTY INFORMATION	
Co-Respondents (please list): Connie Rose	Estimated Number of Children to be Served (county-wide): 350 / 360
	Estimated Number of Eligible Providers (county-wide): 28 / 15
AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	
I HEREBY CERTIFY that, to the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this statement is correct.	
Designated Representative (Printed Name): Brenda McVicker	Title: Director of Elem. Ed.
Signature of Designated Representative: 	Date: 6/27/14
Additional Signatures (of co-respondents, if necessary): 	

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Grant County has had a demonstrated commitment to early childhood learning for many years. Marion Community Schools started its Title I preschool in 1966. The program grew from the time it started to eventually service 153 of Marion's most at-risk youngest students. The program was discontinued in 2003 due to other funding obligations. Marion Community Schools has just hired a new director of preschool education. The new director has an extensive background in early childhood education with both her bachelor and master degrees in early childhood. She has a proven track record of leading preschool programs. Under her guidance Marion Community Schools will offer two new Title I preschool classrooms in the fall and will continue to be the LEA for the Head Start grant. The Head Start grant services 168 of the county's most economically disadvantaged students. Mississinewa, Madison Grant, and Eastbrook schools have committed to expanding early learning opportunities for their students who reside in Grant County. The infrastructure for high quality preschool programs currently exists in all five of the county's public school districts. Additionally, all five districts in the county have made a commitment to pursue a Level 3 or Level 4 Paths to QUALITY rating for their particular preschools.

Grant County's commitment to early childhood learning was evident during Grant County/Marion's community Synergy 07. More than 300 community thought leaders at the summit in 2007 were focused on Early Childhood Education, School Readiness, and Success by 6 as presented by Ted Maple. The Grant County Early Childhood Coalition was formed as a result of Synergy 07. The Grant County Early Childhood Coalition has worked tirelessly since it was founded to bring all stakeholders together to develop a shared vision of early learning for Grant County's youngest learners. These partnerships consist of public and private providers, service organizations, universities, community stakeholders, churches and businesses. As a result, Grant County/Marion is positioned to successfully implement a high-quality early childhood education program. Additional members joined the Coalition as a result of preparing the pre-K pilot proposal. The Coalition is strengthened as a result of this effort. The Coalition strives to bring early learning experiences to Grant County and fully supports the pre-K pilot program submission. The possibility of state support for public preschool funding has given additional focus to this already existing group which has taken leadership in organizing early learning opportunities in the community.

In the private sector, we have a committed group of childcare providers. Westminster Presbyterian Preschool is an historic center in the state. Westminster Presbyterian Preschool is in the self-study process to obtain NAEYC accreditation. As they expanded to a full-time program, Westminster attained VCP status and is at Level 3 for PTQ, although they are moving to national accreditation and Level 4 soon in 2015. The Grant County Licensed Childcare Association was founded in June 2008, representing Family Child Care in the region. When the Association started there were four childcare providers in attendance. To date the Association has grown to thirteen Licensed Providers. As part of the by-laws of the Association all members must be working towards a PT Q rating to remain active in the Association. The Association provides a mentor program to members who are in the process of working towards their PTQ rating. The Grant County Licensed Childcare Association's goal is to provide learning environments,

working with community resources and organizations to help transition preschool students into a school system.

The mission of Grant County is to coordinate and maximize the influence of strategic partners in the Grant County community to bring relevant, high-impact opportunities to our youngest community members and their families and to promote high quality, early childhood educational experiences for every child.

II. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Stake-Holders: Organizations and Entities within the County Currently Supporting EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS and/or INITIATIVES

- Kevin Mahan, State Representative
- City of Marion Officials:
 - Synergy 2012 Focus on Poverty
 - Passports Program, enhancing child/adult relationships and success
 - Circles Program, enhancing lives of families in poverty
 - Stellar Communities Plan, enhancement of Marion Community
- Grant County Economic Growth Council
- United Way of Grant County
- Community Foundation of Grant County
- Marion Community Schools:
 - Head Start
 - Title I Preschool
- Lakeview Christian School Preschool Program
- Mississinewa Community Schools Preschool Program
- St. Paul Catholic School Preschool Program
- Westminster Presbyterian Preschool Program
- Family Services Society, Human Services and Mental Health Provider:
 - Healthy Families, Home-Based programs for at-risk families with young children
 - Cradle School, provides classroom experience for young children and families.
- Carey Services, Human Services provider of programs for children and adults with disabilities and other barriers to success:
 - Early Head Start – Preschool and Home-Based Services
 - High School Prenatal & Parenting Classes
- First Steps Program, provider of therapies for young children
- Marion Public Library, provider of programs for young children and families enhancing literacy
 - Preschool & Toddler Story Times
 - Sign Language Program
 - Pajama Story Time
 - Investigation Stations – Science Exploration
 - Family Story Time
- Marion General Hospital, supporter of health & nutrition programs for young children:

- Great Beginnings, Prenatal Education Provider
- Family Birthing Center, Prenatal Health Provider
- Lactation Consultant
- Indiana Youth Institute, supporter of early childhood initiatives and programs:
 - 40 Developmental Assets, Enhancing the success of young children and families
- St. Martin Community Center, provider of services to people in poverty:
 - Kid's Café, after school nutrition program
- Purdue Extension Programs:
 - Family & Nutrition Program, community nutrition education programs
 - Professor Popcorn, in school children's programs
- God's House Ministries:
 - Center for Success, Enhancing the lives of children in after-school programs
- Allen Temple AME Church
- Mt. Olive Preschool
- Indiana Wesleyan University, Early Childhood Education program
- Taylor University, Early Childhood Education program
- Ball State University, Family and Consumer Sciences Dept.
- Ivy Tech, Early Childhood Education

Local Councils/Coalitions for Early Childhood on which representatives of these organizations participate:

- First Steps Local Planning and Coordinating Council
- Grant County Child Safety Coalition
- Grant County Early Childhood Education Coalition
- Grant County Maternal Child Health Coalition
- Grant County Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect Council
- Grant County Youth Worker Café
- Maternal Substance Abuse Task Force
- Grant County Advisory Council for Family Literacy

III. Family Engagement

A. The family engagement services available to families with young children in Grant County include:

Healthy Families, Early Head Start, Head Start, Cradle School, Grant County Minority Health Coalition, Bridges to Health, First Steps, Marion Public Library, Gas City-Mill Township Public Library, Jonesboro Public Library, Van Buren Public Library, Barton Rees Pogue Memorial Library, Swayzee Public Library, Converse-Jackson Public Library
 MOPS, YMCA, The Search Resource Center for Families, Kid's Hope, Grant County Health Department, free vision and hearing screenings, Grant County Rescue Mission, and counseling services through Family Service Society, Westminster Church and other community churches, Life Center, and Cornerstone Behavioral Health Center.

These services are supportive of early learning programs through the Early Childhood Coalition of Grant County. The focus of the coalition is resource collaboration, community involvement, and school readiness for every child's success. This group has been meeting regularly since 2008 with the purpose of providing broad-based services for young children and their families. The mission of the coalition is to provide a high quality early childhood educational experiences for every child. The vision that has remained at the forefront of the group is to share resources through the collaboration with families, organizations, community members, and professionals. The vision also includes increased community involvement in early childhood programs through the awareness of research and best practices.

B. In order to provide assistance to families, members of the Early Childhood Coalition of Grant County will create a brochure and other informational materials that educate families on the importance of early childhood education. This brochure and other appropriate materials will include information on our local childcare resource and referral (CCRR), Paths to QUALITY, Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), and agencies that provide services to families with young children. The brochure will be distributed through social media, and in print. It will also be made available to parents, local pediatrician offices, the WIC office, and the local FSSA office. Head Start in Grant County will be the model for new parent engagement initiatives. The objective of family engagement for Head Start is:

Parents will be supported as they identify and meet their own goals, nurture the development of their children in the context of their family and culture, and advocate for communities that are supportive of children and families of all cultures.

C. A parent engagement committee was formed to develop a strategy for increased parental involvement in the lives of families who reside in Grant County. The committee consists of community leaders and educators who are passionate about engaging families in their child's education. The committee will assist the Early Childhood Coalition of Grant County in the distribution of the brochure and additional pertinent information referenced above. It will be the goal of the committee to get the brochure in the hands of every person who is currently parenting a child between the ages of newborn to 4. The brochure will also be sent to local churches with the request that the information appear in the church bulletin. It is the hope of the committee that this information will reach children that are currently not being served in our community. The information will also be distributed through the local radio station, community printed news, and the Chronicle Tribune.

IV. PROVIDER CAPACITY

Grant County currently has nine Paths to QUALITY providers with a Level 3 or Level 4. There are fifteen more providers who are voluntarily participating in Paths to Quality. Assistance will also be offered, through Bona Vista Child Care Solutions and the Early Childhood Coalition of Grant County and through to all childcare centers and preschools in Grant County regarding how to reach Level 3 and Level 4 with Paths to QUALITY.

Thirteen of these providers are members of the Grant County Licensed Childcare Association. The Association has committed to having 100 additional spots for new preschool students.

Marion Community Schools has the capacity to expand preschool opportunities to an additional 144 4-year-old preschool students. Mississinewa School Corporation offers full day experiences for preschool and has the capacity to expand their program by one section which would provide services to an additional 15 4-year-old students. Westminster Presbyterian Preschool has the capacity to expand its program by an additional 18 students. The Allen Early Learning Academy will begin enrollment this fall with an initial capacity of 12 students in the targeted demographic, to expand to 24 by the year 2015.

Currently Grant County public Schools have an average of 650 kindergarten students enrolled each year. Records show less than half of these students come to kindergarten with any preschool experience.

V. FINANCIAL MATCH

Several individuals, corporations and likeminded philanthropists are poised to support the expansion of pre-K early learning in Grant County. Their commitment to financial match is best articulated in their agreement to the following:

We are proud to express support for your vision for the expansion of high quality early childhood education in Grant County. The potential impact of such expanded opportunities would have exponential benefits for our county, giving more children a better chance to succeed in school and beyond, and in turn giving our community a better chance to grow and thrive.

We feel that the proposed Indiana pre-K Early Learning Pilot Program aligns well with our own hopes for Grant County. Because of that, we are pleased to signal our willingness to be involved in future conversations and/or campaigns to secure matching funding, should Grant County be chosen to participate in the pilot program.

We are willing to consider funding opportunities through our own organization or business, or to consider helping to identify other individuals, businesses, and foundations who may consider such funding opportunities.

We intend to be supportive of your efforts to expand high quality early childhood education here in Grant County. We look forward to working with you to help maximize the efforts and influence of the broad coalition already involved, and to help find ways to resource your vision.

(See attachment)

VI. COUNTY READINESS AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Grant County is positioned to successfully implement the early Learning Pilot Grant Program beginning in January 2015. Following are Grant County's strengths:

- Experienced Director of Pre-school Education
- Administrative Team: Competent and Passionate

- Community Engagement: Diverse Community Team of seasoned organizations; Committed community stakeholders
 - Family Engagement: Initiatives that foster school readiness which impacts every child's success
 - Provider Capacity: Strategies to encourage and empower expansion of quality child care
 - Financial Match: Determined visionaries willing to invest in early learning opportunities
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To the Grant County Advisory Council for Family Literacy:

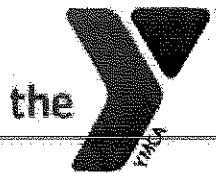
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Sincerely,





June 27, 2014

To the Grant County Advisory Council for Family Literacy:

It is with great pride and honor that I write this letter of support for the expansion of high quality early childhood education in Grant County. A pre-K Early Learning Pilot Program would allow more children the opportunity to succeed and be instrumental in addressing the educational needs of Grant County.

I firmly believe that the proposed pre-K Early Learning Pilot Program will be the stepping-stone to making the City of Marion and Grant County a better place to live, while enabling Grant County to further the great work they have started.

I intend to be supportive of all efforts to expand high quality early childhood education in Grant County, and am looking forward to working with you to help maximize the efforts of the coalition involved.

Sincerely,

Wayne W. Seybold
Mayor
City of Marion