

FY2026 VOLUNTARY PRE-K GRANT APPLICATION QUESTIONS AND SCORING RUBRIC

QUESTION 1

In 750 words or less, please describe how your district supported Pre-K teachers' implementation of state-approved curriculum for Pre-K, TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement (or other research-based, sounds-first foundational skills supplement), and the use of high-quality instructional materials as part of everyday instructional practice. Your response must include the following:

- The specific state-approved curriculum and sounds-first foundational skills supplement used and how the district supported teachers and assistants in the implementation of these high-quality materials
- Examples of how your district ensured curricula is being used to fidelity without additional supplements outside of the required foundational skills supplement
- Examples of how high-quality instructional materials are being used to support teaching and learning
- A plan for delivering relevant and meaningful professional development to voluntary pre-kindergarten teachers, specific to ensuring a high-quality pre-kindergarten experience*
- A breakdown of the required 5.5 hours of instructional time and how this time is used to promote learning goals with preschool children
- How the district ensures coordination and alignment between VPK classrooms and kindergarten with the goal of ensuring that elementary grade instruction builds upon pre-kindergarten classroom experiences*

ARTIFACTS: Pre-K Daily Schedule, Professional Development schedule for teachers and assistant teachers

	Exceptional	Enhanced	Acceptable	No Score
	3	2	1	0
Implementation of approved curricula and foundational skills supplement	<p>District names and provides an exceptional plan for implementing state-approved curriculum for Pre-K, TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement, or other research-based supplement (e.g., Heggerty, CKLA), and high-quality instructional materials.</p> <p>An exceptional plan includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific strategies used to support teachers and assistants in implementing curricula • Many examples of how high-quality instructional materials are being used to support teaching and learning • Many examples of coordination and alignment between VPK and kindergarten • Clear evidence of HQIM usage within the daily schedule 	<p>District names and provides an enhanced plan for implementing state-approved curriculum for Pre-K, TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement, or other research-based supplement (e.g., Heggerty, CKLA), and high-quality instructional materials.</p> <p>An enhanced plan includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific strategies used to support teachers and assistants in implementing curricula • Examples of how high-quality instructional materials are being used to support teaching and learning • Examples of coordination and alignment between VPK and kindergarten 	<p>District names and provides an acceptable plan for implementing state-approved curriculum for Pre-K, TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement, or other research-based supplement (e.g., Heggerty, CKLA), and high-quality instructional materials.</p> <p>An acceptable plan includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of how high-quality instructional materials are being used to support teaching and learning • A plan for delivering relevant and PD to teachers and assistants • One example of coordination and alignment between VPK and kindergarten 	<p>District does not name and/or provide a plan for implementing for state-approved curriculum for Pre-K, TN Foundational Skills Curriculum Supplement, or other research-based supplement (e.g., Heggerty, CKLA), and high-quality instructional materials.</p>

Curriculum implementation			<p>District provides a clear plan for curricula implementation.</p> <p>A plan includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of how teachers and assistants implement curricula with fidelity • Ongoing efforts to ensure curricula being implemented with fidelity throughout the school year 	<p>District does not provide information on how curricula is implemented to fidelity and/or district uses curricula outside of approved comprehensive curricula and foundational skills supplement.</p>
Daily schedule			<p>District provides a daily schedule indicating 5.5 hours of instructional time and includes clear details on how various parts of the day are used to promote learning</p>	<p>District does not provide a daily schedule indicating 5.5 hours of instructional time</p>
Q1 Comments:				Q1 Score: ____/5 pts

QUESTION 2

In 750 words or less, please explain how the district focuses on engaging VPK parents and families throughout the school year beyond what is minimally required within the VPK Scope of Services*. Please include how your district encourages participation on the VPK family satisfaction survey and how this data is used to support programming decisions.

ARTIFACTS: Districts do not have to submit artifacts for this question.

	Exceptional	Enhanced	Acceptable	No Score
	3	2	1	0
Demonstration of how families are informed, engaged, and supported throughout the school year	<p>Provides exceptional response that demonstrates how families are informed, engaged, and supported throughout the school year.</p> <p>An exceptional response includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific strategies used • Strategies for increasing participation on the VPK family satisfaction survey • How data from the VPK satisfaction survey is used to support programming decisions • Examples of data collected on the VPK family survey and programming improvements made as a result of this data 	<p>Provides enhanced response that demonstrates how families are informed, engaged, and supported throughout the school year.</p> <p>An enhanced response includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific strategies used • Strategies for increasing participation on the VPK family satisfaction survey • How data from the VPK satisfaction survey is used to support programming decisions 	<p>Provides acceptable response that demonstrates how families are informed, engaged, and supported throughout the school year.</p> <p>An acceptable response includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific strategies used • Strategies for increasing participation on the VPK family satisfaction survey 	Response does not demonstrate how families are informed, engaged, and supported throughout the school year.
Frequency of communication	Families receive communication from the program on a weekly basis throughout the school year.	Families receive communication from the program monthly throughout the school year.	Families receive communication from the program, but on a less than monthly basis throughout the school year.	Response does not demonstrate frequency of communication.

Q2 Comments:	Q2 Score: ____ /6pts
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QUESTION 3

In 750 words or less, please describe how your district used Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and CLASS Environment data to improve quality in the current school year (must minimally include data points and focus areas) and how the data was used to increase high-quality teaching and learning. Describe what data you have collected and how you are using this data to provide coaching and support to teachers and assistants to ensure students have a high-quality VPK experience. Specifically describe ways your district ensures continuous quality improvement of the pre-K program by implementing quality measurement tools and at what frequency these measures occur. Your response must include the following:

- CLASS observation areas of identified coaching support for teachers including data points guiding decisions related to areas of need
- CLASS Environment areas of identified support including data points guiding decisions related to areas of need
- Specific ways coaching support was provided to teachers following CLASS observations
- Examples of how support provided by the district following CLASS and CLASS Environment observations led to quality improvements for early childhood instruction and environments

ARTIFACTS: Districts do not have to submit artifacts for this question.

	Exceptional	Enhanced	Acceptable	No Score
	3	2	1	0
Pre-K observational data	<p>Provides an exceptional plan for supporting both assistant and lead teachers.</p> <p>An exceptional plan should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLASS and CLASS Environment data points collected during the current school year • Areas of identified support during CLASS and CLASS Environment observations • Examples of coaching supports provided to lead teachers and assistants following observations • Quality improvements experienced as a result of coaching 	<p>Provides an enhanced plan for supporting both assistant and lead teachers.</p> <p>An enhanced plan should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLASS and CLASS Environment data points collected during the current school year • Areas of identified support during CLASS and CLASS Environment observations • Examples of coaching supports provided to lead teachers and assistants following observations 	<p>Provides an acceptable plan for supporting both assistant and lead teachers.</p> <p>An acceptable plan should include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLASS and CLASS Environment data points collected during the current school year • Areas of identified support during CLASS and CLASS Environment observations 	<p>District does not provide CLASS or CLASS Environment data points collected during the current school year and/or provide a plan for supporting both lead teachers and assistant teachers.</p>

	supports provided			
Q3 Comments:				Q3 Score: ___/3pts

QUESTION 4

In 750 words or less, please describe how your district prioritized enrollment of income-eligible four-year old children, including children with disabilities in the 2024-25 school year. Your response must include:

- Current utilization rate (if your utilization rate is below 80%, you must include additional information on ongoing efforts to increase the utilization rate including recruitment and enrollment strategies)
- A breakdown of how many children in your VPK seats are income-eligible and non-income eligible and percent of how many children qualify as children with disabilities representing various categories assigned to children ages 3-5 in the district
- Utilization trends from last three years including how you supported an increase in enrollment for qualifying children
- Efforts to ensure prioritization of income-eligible children including specific strategies your district uses to decide when to enroll three-year-olds or over-income children
- Rationale behind enrolling three-year-old and/or over-income children into VPK including how efforts were exhausted to identify and enroll all eligible four-year-old children prior to enrolling children from other identified groups
- Efforts to ensure equal access for income-eligible children with disabilities including what general education options your district uses to serve preschool children with disabilities who are not age and income eligible for VPK
- Wait list including income-eligible and non-income eligible students and specific information on how children are enrolled from the waitlist

ARTIFACTS: Districts do not have to submit an artifact for this question.

	Exceptional	Enhanced	Acceptable	No Score
	3	2	1	0
Current utilization rate	Response demonstrates at least a 100% current utilization rate in FY24.	Response demonstrates an 90-99% current utilization rate in FY24.	Response demonstrates a 80-89% current utilization rate in FY24.	Response demonstrates <80% current utilization rate in FY24.
Inclusive practices	Provides an exceptional and proactive plan for accommodating children with disabilities and their families in the enrollment process. An exceptional response includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple strategies used to recruit and support children with disabilities and their families with enrollment including the use of 	Provides an enhanced plan for accommodating children with disabilities and their families in the enrollment process. An enhanced response includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies used to recruit and support children with disabilities and their families with enrollment • Data regarding the 	Provides an acceptable plan for accommodating children with disabilities and their families in the enrollment process. An acceptable response includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies used to recruit and support children with disabilities and their families with enrollment • Data regarding the 	Response does not provide guidance on how children with disabilities and their families are accommodated in the enrollment process.

	<p>a universal application process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data regarding the percentage of children with disabilities enrolled into VPK seats and how these children are supported in the general education environment • Additional general education options available in your district to serve preschool children who do not meet eligibility requirements for VPK 	<p>percentage of children with disabilities enrolled into VPK seats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional general education options available in your district to serve preschool children who do not meet eligibility requirements for VPK 	<p>percentage of children with disabilities enrolled into VPK seats</p>	
<p>Outreach and strategies for enrolling eligible children</p>	<p>Provides an exceptional plan of outreach and strategies for serving all four-year old children and prioritize enrollment of eligible children.</p> <p>An exceptional response includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data indicating how many children are currently income-eligible vs. non-income-eligible in VPK • Utilization data showing how trends determine classroom placement, seat placement, recruiting strategies, etc. • Efforts utilized to recruit and enroll eligible children including several examples of 	<p>Provides an enhanced plan of outreach and strategies for serving all four-year old children and prioritize enrollment of eligible children.</p> <p>An enhanced response includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data indicating how many children are currently income-eligible vs. non-income-eligible in VPK • Utilization trends over time • Efforts utilized to recruit and enroll eligible children including several examples of exhaustive efforts to enroll income-eligible four-year-old children • Wait list information and 	<p>Provides an acceptable plan of outreach and strategies for serving all four-year old children and prioritize enrollment of eligible children.</p> <p>An acceptable response includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data indicating how many children are currently income-eligible vs. non-income-eligible in VPK • Utilization trends over time • Efforts utilized to recruit and enroll eligible children including examples of exhaustive efforts to enroll income-eligible four-year-old children 	<p>Response does not provide evidence of outreach made and strategies employed to serve all four-year old children and prioritize enrollment of eligible children and/or district does not follow enrollment guidelines outlined in the VPK Scope of Services</p>

	<p>exhaustive efforts to enroll income-eligible four-year-old children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait list information and strategies for enrolling at-risk children from the waitlist 	<p>strategies for enrolling at-risk children from the waitlist</p>		
<p>Q4 Comments:</p>				<p>Q4 Score: ___ 9pts</p>

QUESTION 5

In 750 words or less, describe how your district’s Voluntary Pre-K program benefits children and families in your community. Your response must include:

- Districts long-range plan for serving all four-year old children regardless of income including the proposed sources of local matching funds*
 - Statement of need including preschool opportunities, poverty rates*, workforce demographics and other outstanding factors impacting families throughout your community including specific sources of information and data
 - Collaborative partnerships supporting children and families in your district
 - Additional services you have provided to VPK families in order to increase enrollment (ex: transportation, extended care, same hours as K-12, etc.) and support at-risk families
 - Student level data from FY24 to demonstrate children leaving VPK have the skills necessary to excel in kindergarten
 - If applicable, requests for additional classroom allocations for FY26 including plan for facility space, teacher recruitment, and additional costs related to opening a new classroom
- ARTIFACTS: Districts do not have to submit an artifact for this question.

	Exceptional	Enhanced	Acceptable	No Score
	3	2	1	0
Statement of need	<p>Provides an exceptional statement of the benefits of VPK for children and families in the community.</p> <p>An exceptional response includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of unmet need of quality childcare options (with specific sources of data) • Evidence of poverty trends (with specific sources of data) • Numerous collaborative partnerships supporting children and families • Evidence of other factors that may impact enrollment • Innovative strategies used to meet the needs of 	<p>Provides an enhanced statement of the benefits of VPK for children and families in the community.</p> <p>An enhanced response includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of unmet need of quality childcare options (with specific sources of data) • Evidence of poverty trends (with specific sources of data) • Collaborative partnerships supporting children and families 	<p>Provides an acceptable statement of the benefits of VPK for children and families in the community.</p> <p>An acceptable response includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preschool opportunities within the community • Poverty trends • Workforce demographics • Collaborative partnerships supporting children and families 	<p>Response does not provide data or evidence related to children and families in the community</p>

	families and children within the district			
Student-level data	<p>Response provides an exceptional demonstration of how student-level data indicates children leaving VPK have the skills necessary to excel in kindergarten.</p> <p>An enhanced response includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific tools and/or methods used to collect student level data on all students in FY24 • Longitudinal data on VPK student outcomes in kindergarten and beyond • How evidence and data is used to make programmatic and instructional changes 	<p>Response provides an enhanced demonstration of how student-level data indicates children leaving VPK have the skills necessary to excel in kindergarten.</p> <p>An enhanced response includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific tools and/or methods used to collect student level data on all students in FY24 • How evidence and data is used to make programmatic and instructional changes 	<p>Response provides an acceptable demonstration of how student-level data indicates children leaving VPK have the skills necessary to excel in kindergarten.</p> <p>An acceptable response includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific tools and/or methods used to collect student level data on all students in FY24 	<p>Response does not demonstrate how student-level data indicates children leaving VPK have the skills necessary to excel in kindergarten.</p>
Long range plan for serving all			District provides a long-term plan for supporting all four-year old children regardless of income including proposed sources of local matching funds.	District does not provide a long-term plan for supporting all four-year old children regardless of income or proposed sources of local matching funds.

Additional supports for families (BONUS)			District does not provide additional services to VPK families such as transportation, extended care, same hours as K-12, etc.	District does not provide additional services to VPK families such as transportation, extended care, same hours as K-12, etc.
Q5 Comments:				Q5 Score: ___ /7 pts

QUESTION 6

In 750 words or less, describe how your district supports Voluntary Pre-K teaching assistants in becoming instructional partners in the classroom in accordance with TCA § 49-6-104. Your response must include:

- The number of teaching assistants holding a Child Development Associate (CDA), early childhood technical certificate, associate degree in early childhood, or higher credentialing in a related field
- How your district supports teaching assistants in obtaining the appropriate credentials including a CDA or associates degree in early childhood
- Specific ways teaching assistants are included in professional development and training beyond what is required in the VPK Scope of Services and Chapter 0520-12-01

ARTIFACTS: Districts do not have to submit an artifact for this question.

	Exceptional	Enhanced	Acceptable	No Score
	3	2	1	0
Teaching assistants as instructional partners	Provides an enhanced statement regarding how VPK teaching assistants are supported as instructional partners. An enhanced response includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of teaching assistants holding a CDA or higher education • Specific ways your district supports assistant teachers through continued education and 	Provides an enhanced statement regarding how VPK teaching assistants are supported as instructional partners. An enhanced response includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of teaching assistants holding a CDA or higher education • Specific ways your district supports assistant teachers through continued education and 	Provides an acceptable statement regarding how VPK teaching assistants are supported as instructional partners. An acceptable response includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of teaching assistants holding a CDA or higher education • Specific ways your district supports assistant teachers through continued education and/or 	Response does not provide data or information on how VPK teaching assistants are supported as instructional partners

	<p>professional development including support in obtaining CDAs or associates degree in early childhood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies for including teaching assistants in professional development beyond what is minimally required • Strategies used to attract and retain pre-K teaching assistants 	<p>professional development including support in obtaining CDAs or associates degree in early childhood</p>	<p>professional development</p>	
<p>All assistant teachers hold at least CDA or equivalent (BONUS)</p>			<p>All assistant teachers hold a CDA, early childhood technical certificate, associates degree in early childhood, or higher</p>	<p>Not all assistant teachers hold a CDA, early childhood technical certificate, associates degree in early childhood, or higher</p>
<p>Q6 Comments:</p>				<p>Q6 Score: ____/3 pts</p>