Transcript from 325A Informational Webinar
Date of WebEx – 6/2/2017

Good morning and welcome to an informational webinar on the **National Center for Improving Teacher and Leader Performance to Better Serve Children with Disabilities**. I am Bonnie Jones from the Office of Special Education Programs, and I will be serving as the facilitator for today's webinar. I am your point of contact for questions regarding the 325A priority. And my contact information is available on the last slide of the slides.

Also Dr. David Guardino, Associate Division Director, at OSEP and Dr. Sarah Allen, who will be the competition manager for the 325A priority, are on the line with me from the Office of Special Education Programs.

Let's move to the **introductions and logistics.**   This is a one hour webinar that is being recorded and your participation is your consent. OSEP plans to upload this session, including transcript and recording to the OSEP Ideas that Work website soon, approximately within one week. If you need access to captioning services to fully participate in the session, use the link in the Chat Box to connect to the captioning services now. Secondly, in order to have the best possible recording, please mute your phone line during the WebEx. Use the chat box to enter your questions. There are breaks for questions throughout the webinar to address questions in the chat box, and I encourage you to use the chat box often. Also, please do not put your line on hold.

What is included in the application package? There are six sections in the application package, and these include the Dear Applicant Letter, followed by sections A through E. It is your responsibility as the applicant to be thoroughly familiar with the requirements in all sections of the application package. During this webinar, I intend to highlight key points as well as particularly useful information.

Today's webinar, as we move to the next slide, is organized with points on the purpose of the program, absolute priority with key definitions, eligible applicants, award information, timeline, program requirements, application and

administrative requirements, and the selection criteria. These nine topics will be presented in sequence and only represent the highlights of the package.

The purpose of the Personnel Development Program is two-fold. It identifies and addresses the State needs for personnel preparation for special educators, related services personnel, others who serve children with disabilities. Another purpose of the program is to attain better prepared, the special education and related services personnel with necessary skills and knowledge derived from practices that are determined through scientifically based research and experience, to be successful in serving those children.

Meeting the diverse needs of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms, and other school settings, requires a complex combination of knowledge and skills, including those practices supported by evidence. Over the past two decades, organizations such as the Council for Chief State School Officers and the Council for Exceptional Children have developed model standards of essential knowledge and skills that teachers need to individualize learning and be effective in improving student achievement including the achievement of students with disabilities. Then in 2015, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration adopted a new set of standards for leaders, known as the professional standard for educational leaders. The standards provide knowledge and skills that educational leaders need to assure that every student is prepared for the 21st century. The teacher and leadership programs including their curriculum must be aligned to those teacher and leader standards. And the programs must be better aligned with state standards that reflect current knowledge and skills in the use of practices supported by evidence if we are to improve teacher and leader performance.

With this 325A priority, we are establishing that the purpose of this priority is to establish and operate a national Center for improving teacher and leader performance to better serve children with disabilities.

In this priority, we include key definitions of terminology that may be new to you or to avoid misunderstandings about the terms' use in the context of this priority. **Strong theory** means a rationale for the proposed process, product,

strategy or practice that includes a logic model. And then **supported by evidence**, means supported by at least strong theory.

Next, OSEP uses three other terms, that most of this audience is familiar with. Technical assistance services means expertise provided in response to a client's defined problem or need. OSEP has specified three categories of technical assistant service-- Universal, targeted and intensive.

Moving along, let's take a brief look at what we are expecting when we say universal, general TA. This means technical assistance and information provided to independent users through their own initiative, resulting in minimal interaction with the center staff, if at all. This category of TA also includes informational products that are downloaded from the TA center's website by independent users. It could also include brief communications by a TA center staff person with recipients, either by telephone or email, and that would also be considered general TA.

Moving along to the description of targeted. Targeted is specialized TA meaning TA services based on a common need of multiple recipients, and not extensively individualized. A relationship is established between the TA recipient and one or more TA center staff. That category of technical assistance includes one time, labor intensive events such as facilitating strategic planning for hosting a regional or national conference. It could include episodic, less labor-intensive events that extend over a period of time, such as facilitating a series of conference calls. Moving to intensive and sustained TA. Many of you are very familiar with this category of TA, because it is at the center of the work that many of you are involved in at this time. Intensive, sustained TA means technical assistant services often provided on-site and requiring a stable, ongoing relationship between the center staff and the recipient of the TA, usually entailing a negotiated series of activities designed to reach a valued outcome. This category of TA should result in changes to policies, programs, practices or operations that support increased recipient capacity or improved outcomes at one or more systems levels.

So there you have a recap on the three categories of technical assistance.

Let's move on to eligible applicants. The eligible applicants include state education agencies, local education agencies, public charter schools included that are considered LEAs under state law. It also includes IHE's, other public agencies, nonprofits, freely associated states and outlying areas, Indian tribes, tribal organizations and for-profit organizations. Of particular note in this priority is the particular use of eligible sub grantees. The grantee may award sub- grants directly to these entities to carry out project activities in the application. So the grantee can award sub-grants to entities it has identified in its application. If the application, is approved it must have the sub grantees identified. In addition, the sub grantee must be suitable to carry out the activities proposed in the application. Sub grantees are the same groups as in the prior slide on eligible applicants that I just discussed.

So that concludes the notes for eligible applicants and eligible sub grantees.

Moving to the next slide, this awarded will be will be funded through a cooperative agreement. To clarify, a cooperative agreement it is not a contract, nor is it a simple grant. It is a class of grant that requires substantial involvement of government. We expect to make one award, and its funding level will not exceed $4,250,000 for any single budget period of 12 months. The project period is up to 60 months.

The priority timeline begins with its publication in the Federal Register on May 22. The deadline for submitting the application is July 6, 2017. The submission date and time is a critical point. The time is 4:30 PM. Washington DC time zone. If the submission is one second beyond 4:30 PM, the application will be rejected by the grants.gov system. It is extremely important that you become very familiar with how to submit in the Grants.gov system. Do not start your submission on July 6, the final day to submit your application. We highly recommend that it be completely submitted a few days prior to July 6, and you will get a date and time stamped notice from Grants.gov that your application was received. Submitting early will avoid disappointments about missing a submission deadline.

OSEP expects that the award will be announced and funding distributed, by October 1, 2017.

Let's move to the next slide.

Prior to the publication of this notice, the Secretary of Education issued a new policy which became effective April 27, 2017. It states effective immediately, program offices may only establish voluntary page limits and formatting requirements for grant applications. ED may not reject applications based on formatting requirements or page limits.

However, program offices may suggest or recommend page limits and formatting standards, but we cannot use that limitation for a basis to reject grant applications. So therefore, the entire set of formatting and page limits are all recommended. If you have any questions about anything with formatting and page limits, remember they are recommendations only.

We recommend a 12 point or larger. Please double space all text in the application narrative. We recommend that you use one of the following fonts. Times new Roman, Courier, Courier New or Arial. Finally, we recommend that the narrative be limited to no more than 50 pages. We expect the pages to be the standard -- Eight and half by 11 inches, with a 1 inch margin at the top and bottom and both edges of the page. Use text on one side only.

With that, it is time for questions in the chat box.

If there is not time to respond to all questions, I can get back with on the answer. The first question -
Is there any set of expectations at what percentage of time a TA center should spend among universal, targeted and intensive approaches? For example 25% is universal 25% targeted and 50% intensive.
My response is no, the applicant needs to look at the work scope, and adjust the universal, targeted, and intensive TA to the work required to attain the outcomes expected for this priority. It was a good question.
Align the TA needed to the definition of intensive, or universal or targeted, and make decisions from that point.
Are there other comments or questions in the chat box?

This next question reads: I noticed there was no specific mention of knowledge development tasks. Can you tell me the reason for that change?

My response is: Although the current 325A priority required knowledge development component, this new 325A priority does not require it. Over the past five years we have moved to implementation, sustainability and scaling up stages.

I am on, Bonnie; I think you answered it well. In addition to going back to the priority, looking at the elements where it says to develop and demonstrate knowledge in those areas, I think you are right, implementation is focused.

Thank you.
One more question. Are there a required number of states that the center is supposed to work with?
My response: No, there were not a required number of states noted within the priority. However, it it an expectation that the proposal includes a number of states and that the proposal demonstrate analysis of state readiness and design of the TA approach to be used, leaving the number of states flexible. Again, I direct you to the expected outcomes of the center.

Okay, I don't see any other questions now, so let's go back to the slides.

We have a number of outcomes we expect this national center to attain. They are ambitious, and we think they are right on target with what the field needs and what we know how to do. We are going to briefly move through these outcomes now. We expect this center will improve the capacity of states to review and strengthen their certification or licensure standards and requirements. This is done in collaboration with IHEs and LEAs that operate teacher and leader preparation programs to ensure that the standards are derived from practices supported by evidence and reflect the knowledge and skills necessary for teachers and leaders to successfully serve students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms and school settings. Including at a minimum, evidence-based interventions in reading, math, and behavior and school climate. Moving on. We are looking at the improved capacity of states to adopt and implement rigorous program approval standards for teacher and leader preparation programs. We are looking at the increased capacity of IHE's to

embed practices and frameworks supported by evidence and aligned to state licensure or certification requirements, into their preparation programs.

We expect increased capacity of SEAs and IHE's to use data from a variety of sources including student data attributed to teachers and leaders, who successfully exit preparation programs to inform continuous improvement of those programs. And then we expect increased capacity of SEAs to align and implement their statewide plans to include certification or licensure reform and IHE teacher and leader program reform, to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Moving on to the application part three, the narrative section. There are five sections included the narrative section. The sections in the narrative section have clear alignment with the selection criteria that peer reviewers will use to rate applications.

I would like to emphasize a few points in the narrative section.
We will be evaluating how well the proposed project will support states to reform certification or licensure standards and program approval standards , to include practices and frameworks supported by evidence, consisting of at a minimum, competencies in evidence-based interventions in reading, math, behavior and school climate. Again we expect to see particular areas being addressed in the work of the center at a minimum - reading, math, and behavior and school climate.

Applicants should identify effective strategies for achieving institutional change and reform in those IHE's and LEAs that prepare teachers and leaders.

A second part of the significance of the project is that we expect the applicant to present national and state data demonstrating the current needs of states to reform teacher and leader certification or licensure standards and program approval standards to include practices and frameworks supported by evidence to ensure teachers and leaders are fully prepared to serve students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms and school settings.

Moving to the next. The quality of project services. On the first slide, we expect that the project will ensure equitable access and treatment for members of

groups that have traditionally been underserved based on race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability. To meet that requirement we state exactly how to show your evidence. Identify the needs of these intended recipients for TA and information, and ensure that services and products meet the needs of the intended recipients of the grant.

Moving to the next slide on quality of projects services.
    The proposed project will achieve its goals, objectives, and intended outcomes. And we expect that the applicant must provide measurable intended project outcomes, the logic model by using the proposed project to achieve its intended outcomes.

Please pay close attention to this description of the logic model because it is nuanced from what you might be familiar with to be used with   the logic model used in connection with this priority communicates that the project will achieve its intended outcomes and provides a framework for both the formative and summative evaluations of the project. That is OSEP's definition of logic model.

And then we also expect the use of the conceptual framework to develop project plans and activities, describing any underlying concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs or theories, as well as presumed relationships or linkages among these variables, and any empirical support for this framework.

Moving to the next quality of project services slide. We expect the project will be based on current research and make use of practices supported by evidence. The applicant describes at least these three points. Current research on system change and capacity building with SEAs and IHE that will inform the TA that is indicated and that align with the reformed efforts. The current research about a learning adult learning principles and implementation science that will inform the proposed technological assistance. And how the project will incorporate current research strategy supported by evidence in the development and delivery of its products and services.

Moving to the next slide on quality of project services. The center will develop products and provide services that are high-quality and of sufficient intensity and duration to achieve the intended outcomes of the proposed project. To address this requirement we expect you to propose and use an approach in your

universal TA, and your targeted TA. In the targeted TA which must identify your intended recipients of the products and services under this approach, and the proposed approach to measure the readiness of potential TA recipients to work with the project, assessing at a minimum, there current infrastructure, available resources and ability to build capacity for ongoing reform and continuous improvement at the SEAs and IHE level. Essentially, we want to make sure the center targets OSEP funds in this type of specialized TA to those with potential for building capacity for ongoing reform and continuous improvement.

And then we expect that the project will select and provide targeted TA to SEAs and LEAs and those SEAs have the capacity to initiate, scale up and sustain alignment and reform efforts. And finally we are looking for the process that the project will use to collaborate with other relevant TA centers and national organizations, as appropriate, to develop and implement targeted TA strategies in order to reduce duplication of effort and maximize efficiency . So we are looking at not only what you do, but how smartly do it to reduce duplication of effort and maximize efficiency. And finally, the project will propose its **approach to intensive, sustained TA,** and must identify-
(A) The intended recipients of the products and services under this approach;
(B) Its proposed approach to measure the readiness of SEAs and IHEs teacher and leader preparation programs to work with the project, including their commitment to the initiative, alignment of the initiative to their needs, current infrastructure, available resources, and ability to build capacity at SEA and IHE levels; and
(C) The process by which the project will select, and provide ongoing intensive TA to SEAs and IHEs that are positioned to engage in systemic reform efforts.

And now the final slide on Project services – the applicant must describe how they will develop and implement services that maximize efficiency. We expect the project to use technology to achieve the intended project outcomes, we expect the project will collaborate on the intended outcomes of this collaboration; and how the project will use non-project resources to achieve the intended project outcomes.

Moving on to the quality of the evaluation plan.
 (c) In the narrative section of the application under **Quality of the Evaluation Plan**, include an evaluation plan for the project as described in the following

paragraphs. The evaluation plan must describe: measures of progress in implementation, including the criteria for determining the extent to which the project's products and services have reached the project's target population; measures of intended outcomes or results of the project's activities in order to evaluate those activities; and how well the goals or objectives of the proposed project, as described in its logic model, have been met.

The next part of the narrative section is adequacy of the project resources. The proposed project will encourage applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability, as appropriate;
The proposed key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors have the qualifications and experience to carry out the proposed activities and achieve the project's intended outcomes;
The applicant and any key partners have adequate resources to carry out the proposed activities; and
The proposed costs are reasonable in relation to the anticipated results and benefits.

Finally, the last section in the narrative is the management plan. The proposed management plan will ensure that the project's intended outcomes will be achieved on time and within budget. To address this requirement, the applicant must describe--
Clearly defined responsibilities for key project personnel, consultants, and subcontractors, as applicable; and Timelines and milestones for accomplishing the project tasks;

Continuing on with the management plan. Key project personnel and any consultants and subcontractors will be allocated and how these allocations are appropriate and adequate to achieve the project's intended outcomes;
The proposed management plan will ensure that the products and services provided are of high quality, relevant, and useful to recipients; and
that it will benefit from a diversity of perspectives, including those of families, educators, TA providers, researchers, and policy makers, among others, in its development and operation.

Okay, let's move back to the chat box for some more questions.

Question: The language below was explicitly mentioned in the RFP. If you can, would you elaborate a bit more on the requirements. For example, we currently have intensive state websites that provide an overview of their state work. The incumbent will include information on their website describing their current work that's what I am referencing. Does that suffice?

Response: Yes, the incumbent, CEEDAR, has described its work on the http://www.ceedar.org website for any potential applicant to review the range of products and the work in states that CEEDAR has accomplished over the past four years.

Question: The incumbent will include information on the website describing the current work. OSEP will conduct a teleconference.

Response: We can arrange that if requested, but the CEEDAR website and this informational webinar is sufficient.

One more question. Does the requirement of including a diversity perspective within planning and implementation, including parents of students with disabilities, does that mean we have a plan to do so, or should have this voice represented in the design of the proposal?

Response: The requirement is post award, during planning and implementation. It is not necessarily meaning that you are bringing in a person with a disability during writing your proposal, pre-award.

Question: Bonnie, I noticed the center of expected to better prepare personnel to work with infants and children. I wonder because I've already been talking to Mary Bruder . Being uncertain of whether we are still charged with sticking with the school-aged children, or we need to start thinking about reaching down with our work to early childhood.

Response: Not true. The purpose of the program does include the infants and toddlers, but no services for infants and toddlers are included for this center. We

expect this center to serve the K-12 population. I don't think you will find it mentioned anywhere else.

Given no more questions, let's go back to the final section.

Okay. Let's talk a little bit about general requirements.
Recipients of funding under this competition must make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in project activities (see section 606 of IDEA); and
Each applicant for, and recipient of funding under this notice must involve individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals with disabilities ages birth through 26 in planning, implementing, and evaluating the projects (see section 682(a)(1)(A) of IDEA).

The applicant must:
    (1) Include, in Appendix A, a logic model that depicts, at a minimum, the goals, activities, outputs, and intended outcomes of the proposed project;
    (2) Include, in Appendix A, a conceptual framework for the project;
    (3) Include, in Appendix A, personnel-loading charts and timelines, as applicable, to illustrate the management plan described in the narrative;
(4) Include, in the budget, attendance at the following:

(5) Include a set-aside annually that is 5% of the grant amount to support emerging needs.

6) Maintain a website that meets government or industry-recognized standards for accessibility; and
(7) Include, in Appendix A, an assurance to assist OSEP with the transfer of pertinent resources and products and to maintain the continuity of services to States during the transition to this new award period, as appropriate.

Reviewers will be instructed to review the content of Appendix A.
Charts, tables, figures, graphs, screen shots and logic models that provide information directly relating to the application requirements for the narrative should be the only items included in Appendix A. Appendix A should not be used for supplementary information.

Include in the budget -

A **one and one-half day kick-off** meeting in Washington, DC, after receipt of the award, and an annual planning meeting in Washington, DC, with the OSEP project officer and other relevant staff during each subsequent year of the project period.

A **two and one-half day project directors' conference** in Washington, DC, during each year of the project period;

Four annual two-day trips to attend Department briefings, Department-sponsored conferences, and other meetings, as requested by OSEP; and

A **one-day intensive 3+2 review meeting** in Washington, DC, during the last half of the second year of the project period;

When OSEP decides whether to continue funding the project for the fourth and fifth years of the project, it will take the recommendation of a 3+2 review team. OSEP will consider the success and timeliness with which requirements of the negotiated cooperative agreement have been or are being met by the project.

And OSEP will also consider the quality, relevance and usefulness of the projects, products and services and the extent to which those projects products and services are aligned with the project's objectives, and how likely they are to result in the project achieving its intended outcomes.

Performance measures are the last topic in this section before I address more questions.

This center will use the performance measures designated for technical assistance and dissemination program.

 OSEP has established a set of performance measures including long-term measures that are designed to yield the information on various aspects of these effectiveness and quality as a whole.

Measures focus on the extent to which projects provide high quality products and services, and the project funded under this competition is required to submit data on these measures directly to OSEP and will also be required to submit an annual and final performance report.

No more questions.

To conclude today's informational webinar; I'll include a few reminders. A peer review panel will be reviewing all applications under this 84.325A priority. Using selection criteria that align to the required sections of the application narrative.

Each selection criterion, and there are five of them, are assigned points ranging from 5 points for Significance of the project to 40 points for quality of project services. Note that points for all selection criteria total to 100 points, total. The application package, on pages A25 through A 27, describes the selection criteria and the factors under each selection criteria.

They are also included as the last set of slides in this webinar. And since there are no final questions, this will conclude today's webinar.

I want to thank each of you for joining today. Do not hesitate to get in touch with me, if you have additional questions. My contact information is on the final slide. As a final note, this informational webinar will be posted on the IDEAs that Work website within a week after today, and will include the transcript and recording. Have a great weekend. [Event concluded]