



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



April 20, 2016

Ken Wagner  
Commissioner  
Rhode Island Department of Education  
255 Westminster St.  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Dr. Wagner:

This letter is in response to Rhode Island's request to amend its Preschool Development Grant (PDG). The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the Departments) approved Rhode Island's grant projects and scope of work on July 31, 2015. On March 29, 2016, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) submitted an amendment request to revise its budget in the second year of the grant and also to add three high-need communities to the State preschool program.

As you are aware, the Departments have the authority to approve amendments provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On September 14, 2015, the Departments sent a document to Project Directors describing the process by which amendments would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Departments have applied the conditions noted in that document and compared it with the PDG program requirements and conditions.

On March 29, 2016, RIDE sent an amendment request to its Project Officers indicating the grantee would like to carry over unspent funds from Year 1 to Year 2 of the budget. Rhode Island's actual expenditures in the first year of the grant were less than its initial budget. However, all funds have been obligated and RIDE anticipates that most Year 1 funds will be expended by June 30, 2016.

The following amendments are approved, as described below:

RIDE has requested to move the following funds from the Year 1 to the Year 2 budget:

- Contractual: move \$165,840 from Year 1 to Year 2, for the same purpose.
- Funds to high need communities: move \$2,023,808 from Year 1 to Year 2, for the same purpose.
- Technical Assistance: move \$22,061 from Year 1 to Year 2, for the same purpose.

In addition, RIDE has requested to expand eligibility to participate in the PDG grant to three high-needs communities. During the initial grant year, the State received applications from 12 community agencies for 16 classrooms. While this was sufficient to accommodate the 2015-2016 expansion numbers, RIDE plans to add an additional 20 classrooms in school year 2016-2017. To ensure the State would be able to successfully expand as described in its approved scope of work, RIDE analyzed its most recent Free and Reduced Price Lunch data to identify additional high-needs communities.

Based on this analysis, RIDE has proposed expansion to the following three communities: Cranston, Johnston, and North Providence. Additionally, State staff met with the three communities to assess their interest and capacity to join the PDG program, and confirmed that all three communities demonstrated substantial interest and capacity. These communities would be eligible to apply for subgrants in the second year of the PDG grant.

We understand that this amendment request will not impact Rhode Island's overall PDG goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure Rhode Island can continue to make progress on its PDG scope of work

activities. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department of Education's website as a record of the amendment request and our approval.

We are confident that Rhode Island will continue its comprehensive efforts towards building successful state systems of early learning. If you need any assistance regarding PDG, please do not hesitate to contact your Project Officer, Deborah Spitz, at (202) 260-3793 or [Deborah.Spitz@ed.gov](mailto:Deborah.Spitz@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

/s/

Libby Doggett  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Office of Early Learning  
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education  
U.S. Department of Education

/s/

Linda K. Smith  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood  
Development  
Administration for Children and Families  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services