



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

July 25, 2014

The Honorable Martin O'Malley
Office of the Governor
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Governor O'Malley:

I am writing in response to the amendment request submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) on July 15, 2014, by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), and the technical corrections submitted on July 25, 2014. PARCC proposed an amendment requesting a no-cost extension of the grant period for the purpose of finalizing assessment development technology services, educator resources, and consortium coordination. In addition, PARCC requested several adjustments to the budgets for various projects.

As you know, the Department has the authority to approve an amendment to your plan and budget provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved grant project. The Department's February 28, 2011, letter establishes the review process for any amendment to PARCC's approved plan. In determining whether to approve this request, the Department has applied the conditions noted in the February 28 letter.

Through this amendment request, PARCC proposes to extend the development period for the final portion of grant-funded assessment items through April 2015. The consortium also requests to extend the technology portion of the project through August 1, 2015 in order to implement technology support and verification processes. PARCC will continue coordination efforts across States and will hold additional convenings for both elementary and secondary education leaders and higher education leaders. By extending the development timeline, PARCC will ensure that it maximizes value, reliability, and quality of the resulting products.

The consortium proposed changes to its budget. In several cases, particularly regarding research and evaluation, the major cause of proposed budget adjustments was to reflect a single contract in only one budget module, as opposed to identifying in a single contract costs relevant to multiple budget modules. In addition, the consortium realized cost savings related to travel and meetings in several project areas.

The Department **approves** this amendment requesting an extension of the grant period for the purpose of finalizing assessment development, technology efforts, educator resources, and consortium coordination through August 1, 2015.

It is our understanding that this amendment and no-cost extension will not result in a change to PARCC's performance measures and outcomes, nor will they substantially change the scope and objectives of the work. Please note that we expect grantees to liquidate all funds by September 1, 2015, given that, by law, all Race to the Top Assessment funds revert to the U.S. Department of Treasury as of October 1, 2015. The Department is not awarding any additional funds through this amendment approval. The consortium must request and receive approval to move forward with no-cost extensions for any additional projects.

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

The grantee remains responsible for complying with all terms and conditions of the grant award and with all statutory and regulatory obligations. Florida, as the fiscal agent for the grant, remains responsible for ensuring that all activity related to the grant is done in accordance with all terms and conditions of the grant award and with all statutory and regulatory obligations.

As noted in our communication of February 28, 2011, this letter will be posted on the Department's website as a public record of the amendment proposal and consideration. If you need any assistance or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Jessica McKinney at (202) 401-1960 or Jessica.McKinney@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Ann Whalen
Director, Policy and Program Implementation
Implementation and Support Unit

cc: Lillian Lowery, Maryland Department of Education
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