



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

September 9, 2013

The Honorable Rick Scott
Executive Office of the Governor
PL05, The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

I am writing in response to the amendment request submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) on September 6, 2013, by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). PARCC proposed an amendment requesting a no-cost extension of the grant period for the purpose of completing development of technology components, including assessment administration, scoring and reporting, and shared technology services.

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 custom PARCC-designed technology components that will help the States continue to develop, administer, deliver, score, and report assessments. These systems will support both summative and non-summative (i.e., diagnostic, formative, and mid-year) assessments and will be fully modular and interoperable. PARCC will phase the technology development. Accordingly, the reporting services will be available in fall 2014; the item bank, delivery platform, and shared services will be available for non-summative assessment field testing in winter/spring 2015; and full operational use for all modules will begin in the 2015-2016 school year. PARCC has stated that the assessment professional development modules, and the Partnership Resource Center will be available in time for the 2014-2015 school year; they are not included in this no-cost extension request. The consortium has developed plans that will provide for the temporary use of assessment development and administration platforms in the intervening time period. PARCC proposed this amendment in order to address timing challenges regarding technology procurement and development. By extending the development timeline, PARCC will ensure that it maximizes value, reliability, and quality of the resulting products.

The Department *approves* this amendment requesting an extension of the grant period for the purpose of technology infrastructure development. Extending the available time for this development work will ensure that the States get the best value for the funds allocated. It will also increase time available to test the system and to prepare for implementing full operational use of these systems in the 2015-2016 school year.

The original grant period ends on September 26, 2014. The Department is hereby approving a one-year no-cost extension for the development of assessment development, administration, and scoring/reporting technology infrastructure. The project period for this work will therefore extend through August 1, 2015.

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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.

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.

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: Pam Stewart, Florida Department of Education
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