



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

December 2, 2013

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, Washington 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

I am writing in response to the request submitted by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) September 25, 2013, and the supplemental information submitted on November 7, 2013. Smarter Balanced requested to reallocate funding within its budget to assessment design, research and evaluation, technology, and higher education activities.

The U.S. Department of Education (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 proposal. On February 28, 2011, the Department sent a letter indicating the process by which amendments would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted for this request, the Department applied that process.

The Department approves the requested adjustment. With the approval of this amendment, the consortium will reallocate \$4,428,532 to support the consortium's approach to achievement standards setting. The additional funds will support the development of a web-based standards-setting application to increase the number of individuals that may participate in the process and support on-going communications about the standards-setting process. Additionally, the consortium will reallocate \$858,605 to support technology enhancements to the assessment platform being developed and to support efforts to demonstrate the interoperability of the technology system. Funds for this work will be taken from areas where the original budget estimates were higher than actual expenditures during the first three years. For example, the consortium reallocated \$3,151,492 because the contract for field test item writing and pilot and field test scoring was less than originally budgeted. In

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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.

addition, funds for several projects have been reallocated because the consortium has not needed the full amount budgeted in the first three years for these activities (e.g., \$121,500 for policy and technical consultants and \$174,826 for the consortium's policy advisor). The consortium reallocated \$693,278 from the "state item donation" project because the consortium determined this was not a viable strategy for developing items for the Smarter Balanced assessment system.

It is the Department's understanding that the requested budget adjustment will not change the consortium's scope of work nor result in a change to the consortium's approved master work plan. This approval letter will be posted on the Department's website as a public record of this amendment.

The Department looks forward to a continued partnership with the consortium as it completes the development of the assessments, conducts a field test in its member states, and sets achievement standards for determining college-and career-readiness. If you have questions or need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Benecia Tuthill at Benecia.Tuthill@ed.gov or (202) 453-5545.

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: Randy Dorn, Washington State Superintendent
Joe Willhoft, Executive Director, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium
Tony Alpert, Chief Operating Officer, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium
Michael Middleton, Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public
Instruction
Stanley Rabinowitz, WestEd