



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

October 2, 2014

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 amendment request submitted by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced) on September 29, 2014. Smarter Balanced requested a no-cost extension of the grant period until December 31, 2014, for the purpose of completing several activities related to item writing, technology, research and evaluation, professional capacity and outreach, governance, and higher education. Smarter Balanced also submitted an amendment request to make adjustments to its approved budget.

As you know, 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 grant project. The Department's February 28, 2011, letter establishes the review process for any amendment to the Smarter Balanced approved plan. In determining whether to approve this request, the Department has applied the conditions noted in the February 28 letter.

The Department approves this request extending the grant period for certain activities related to the grant until December 31, 2014. The additional time will ensure that Smarter Balanced focuses additional attention on critical aspects of assessment development and sets the consortium up for success in its initial operational assessment administrations. The Department also approves the budget amendment to reallocate \$4,625,861 to support no-cost extension and other activities. The budget amendment will support item development and field testing, including expanding the pool of performance tasks and ensuring accessibility of items. The budget also focuses funds on finalizing technology platform enhancements as well as packaging summative and interim assessments and maintaining the availability of the Smarter Balanced practice tests. It extends work with certain staff and supports ongoing work with the state of Washington.

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It is our understanding that this amendment and no-cost extension will not result in a change to the Smarter Balanced performance measures and outcomes, nor will they change the scope and objectives of the work. 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. This approval letter will be posted on the Department's website as a public record of this amendment.

As always, the Department looks forward to a continued partnership with Smarter Balanced as it completes its goal of designing and implementing an assessment system that will provide information to students, parents, and educators about student readiness for college and careers. If you have questions or need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Jessica McKinney at [Jessica.McKinney@ed.gov](mailto:Jessica.McKinney@ed.gov) or (202) 401-1960.

Sincerely,

/s/

Patrick Rooney  
Acting 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  
Richard Whitmore, WestEd