



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

June 7, 2013

Superintendent Soner Tarim  
Harmony Science Academy (Harmony Public Schools)  
9321 W. Sam Houston Pkwy  
S. Houston, TX 77099

Dear Superintendent Tarim:

I would like to thank the staff at Harmony Public Schools (Harmony) for their hard work and collaboration with us as you begin to implement your Race to the Top - District grant. The U.S Department of Education (Department) views the Scopes of Work as the manageable, actionable work plan that is necessary to accomplish a grantee's approved application.

On December 27, 2012, Harmony received a grant of \$29,866,938 with the condition that it draw down no more than 10 percent of the grant prior to approval of the Scope of Work. The Scope of Work must include specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures. Harmony submitted its initial Scope of Work and school implementation plans for all impacted schools on April 8, 2013. The Department has conducted an initial review of the Scope of Work and found that the Scope of Work was missing some elements and requested that Harmony make some revisions to the document. As a result, the Department has not yet approved the Scope of Work.

Harmony has indicated that it needs immediate access to \$7,270,556.72, which is more than 10 percent (\$2,986,693.80) of its grant, to procure technology equipment needed to implement its planned personalized learning environments for school year (SY) 2013-2014. Purchasing such equipment at this time will allow Harmony to train teachers on the use of the equipment during the summer and maintain its proposed timeline.

Specifically, Harmony Public Schools has requested access to \$7,270,556.72 for the following commitments included in its application, Scope of Work, and budget:

- Provide hand-held technology devices to each participating student and teacher to use in the classroom and beyond school hours. Students and teachers will use these devices to access the technology components of project-based learning plans and learning software for enrichment and remediation courses. The vendor for these devices requires four to six weeks to prepare the devices for use. Therefore, in order to have the devices ready for teachers' summer training prior to the start of SY 2013-2014, the grantee

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reports that this procurement must happen no later than early June 2013. The grantee allocated supplies funding for this activity in the "Implementation and Support for all projects" budget. The total allocation is \$8,628,705 across all four years, including \$6,566,274 in Year 1. The grantee requests access to \$5,910,614.72 of this allocation at this time, due to the contract coming in under budget.

- Complete information technology (IT) infrastructure upgrades at participating schools to accommodate increased technology use in classrooms. The grantee allocated supplies funding for this activity in the "Implementation and Support for all projects" budget. The total allocation is \$818,852 across all four years, including \$758,936 in Year 1. The grantee requests \$659,639 of this allocation at this time, due to the contract coming in under budget.
- Procure and pay licensing fees for educational student learning software for online remedial, advancement, and elective courses for students. The grantee plans to execute two contracts to obtain the necessary mathematics and language arts software for educators. In order to have this software available for teachers' summer training prior to the start of SY 2013-2014, the grantee reports that this procurement must happen no later than mid-June 2013. The grantee clarified that it can access and train on the software prior to the arrival of the devices. The grantee allocated supplies funding for this activity in the "Custom Day" budget. The total allocation is \$2,313,630 across all four years, including \$481,734 in Year 1. The grantee requests all of this Year 1 allocation at this time, due to the contract coming in over budget. The grantee reports it will use local matching funds to pay for the remaining amount.
- Provide professional development to teachers and administrators using the student learning software, described above. The vendor for each of the aforementioned contracts will provide the professional development in summer 2013, in preparation for implementation during SY 2013-2014. The grantee allocated supplies funding for this activity in the "Custom Day" budget. The total allocation is \$1,260,705 across all four years, including \$365,328 in Year 1. The grantee requests access to \$182,569 of this allocation at this time, due to the contract coming in under budget.

With this funding, Harmony Public Schools can proceed with the procurements identified above that are needed for it to stay aligned to its proposed implementation timeline. Upon approval of the Grantee Scope of Work, Harmony Public Schools will be able to draw down its remaining award balance.

The Department is approving Harmony's request and approving access to \$7,270,556.72 on the condition that Harmony submit by July 1, 2013, a revised Scope of Work that includes the grantee's specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures for all projects and budgets.

Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of this action.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top-District, please do not hesitate to contact Harmony Public Schools' Race to the Top-District Program Officer, Rebecca Zazove, at 202-260-1425 or [Rebecca.Zazove@ed.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Zazove@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: Burak Yilmaz, Race to the Top - District Project Director