



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



October 29, 2015

Bobbie Burnham
Director, Minnesota Office of Early Learning
130 State Capitol,
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Ms. Burnham:

This letter is in response to Minnesota's request to amend its approved Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant, including revisions to the project period to implement a portion of its plan. On October 15, 2015, Minnesota requested a 12-month no-cost extension for Project 8: Kindergarten Entrance Assessment.

As you are aware, the Departments have the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On March 3, 2015, the Departments issued "Amendment Requests with No-Cost Extension Guidance and Principles" indicating the process by which amendments containing requests to provide additional time for a grantee to accomplish the reform goals and deliverables it committed to in its RTT-ELC application and approved Scope of Work would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Departments have applied the conditions noted in that document and compared it with RTT-ELC program requirements and conditions. In reviewing this request, project officers considered the State's explanation and plan for how the work will be sustained (or, if appropriate, completed) after the timeframe of the no-cost extension.

Based on the documentation submitted, Minnesota has fulfilled the conditions specified. Under the approved amendment, Minnesota will continue to implement its Kindergarten Entry Assessment project through December 31, 2016.

The following no-cost extension amendment for the above projects is approved, as described below:

- Project 8 (Kindergarten Entrance Assessment): The School Readiness Study 2.0 (Minnesota's KEA) is designed to explore and continually refine a menu of assessment tools that align with the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress and the kindergarten academic standards with the plan that districts or schools will choose one tool from the menu to implement. Minnesota is requesting a no-cost extension for Project 8 in order to complete the analysis of the final year of replication for Phase II which includes the fourth menu tool for Minnesota's new Kindergarten Entrance Assessment, the Kindergarten Entrance Profile (KEP). The no-cost extension will

allow Minnesota to obtain additional staff time to continue to plan for the future implementation of the KEP. Minnesota will spend up to \$105,125.89 for contracting costs.

The Departments approve Minnesota's request to obligate funds through December 31, 2016 for the purposes described in this letter for Projects 8: Kindergarten Entrance Assessment. The State must request and receive approval to move forward with no-cost extensions for any additional projects, should other requests be needed.

It is our understanding that this amendment request will not change Minnesota's overall RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure Minnesota can continue to make progress on its RTT-ELC scope of work activities. The Departments expect grantees with no-cost extensions to liquidate all funds by March 31, 2017, given that by law all RTT-ELC funds revert to the U.S. Department of Treasury as of October 1, 2017. This letter will be posted to ED's website as a record of the amendments.

If you need any assistance regarding RTT-ELC, please do not hesitate to contact your Project Officer, Brenda Wilkins, at (202) 245-6920 or Brenda.Wilkins@ed.gov or your co-project officer Michael Mencarini, at (312) 886-3378 or michael.mencarini@acf.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Libby Doggett
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Early Learning
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
U.S. Department of Education

/s/

Linda K. Smith
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood
Development
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

cc: Bobbie Burnham, Director, Minnesota Office of Early Learning
Lisa Barnidge, RTT-ELC Project Manager