



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



December 31, 2013

Melvin Carter  
Office of Early Learning  
Minnesota Department of Education  
1500 West Hwy 36  
Roseville, MN 55113

Dear Mr. Carter,

This letter is in response to Minnesota's request to amend its approved Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) scope of work – specifically as it relates to your performance measures. The State submitted an amendment request to the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services (the Departments) as part of their APR submission in February 2013.

As you are aware, the Departments have the authority to approve amendments provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On July 18, 2012, the Departments sent a document to Project Directors describing the process by which amendments 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.

The following amendment request is approved, as described below:

- Related to **Table (B)(2)c and Table (B)(4)c-2**: A change in definition such that for programs funded by IDEA, Part B and Part C, MN would define "program" as the district (LEA) which organizes and administers services for children with special needs. In the original application, "program" was defined as the building site where direct services are delivered. (The idea is that for purposes of counting children receiving IDEA services, the children tend to be counted by district, not by program site because children move around a lot depending on their needs. The district (LEA) is responsible for managing the child's IEP, not the program site.) For all other program types (school-based preschool, Early Head Start and Head Start, programs funded under Title I, licensed programs receiving CCDF funds, and licensed child care programs not receiving CCDF funds), "program" will continue to be defined as the building site where direct services are delivered. We understand that although there will be a different definition resulting in a different count of the number of programs in the state, there will not be a change in the target percentages of IDEA Part B and Part C programs rated by the TQRIS.

- Related to **Table (B)(2)c and Table (B)(4)c-2**: A change in definition such that MN would define IDEA funded programs as those programs operated by the local education agencies identified as eligible to receive Part C or Part B funds and who sign statements of assurances that pertain to regulatory compliance and appropriate use of funds. Under this revised definition, other programs that may enroll a child with a disability are not considered IDEA funded programs for purposes of Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge. For programs funded by IDEA Parts B and C, the original definition of programs funded by IDEA Parts B and C was any program that serves at least one child with an IEP or IFSP.
- Related to **Table (B)(2)c and Table (B)(4)c-2**: Changing the total number of Early Head Start and Head Start programs to reflect more accurate numbers. The original numbers were based on results of a survey of programs conducted in 2010. More accurate numbers have been obtained from FY2013 MN State Head Start Program Plans. Target numbers for future years will also need to be raised to maintain target percentages.
- Related to **Table (B)(2)c and Table (B)(4)c-2**: Revising the baseline data using an improved methodology for determining the total number of programs funded by Title I. The revised baseline data reflects the number of ELD sites in school districts that reported using Title I funds for Preschool in SFY2012 and were also in the TQRIS as of December 30, 2011. The original total number of programs funded by Title I was an estimation and involved data from two different time frames (child data from SFY2010 and ratings data for December 31, 2011).
- Related to **Table (B)(2)c**: Revising the baseline data using an improved methodology for calculating the baseline number of programs receiving CCDF funds. The proposed methodology uses MEC2 (the child care subsidy administration data system) to determine the number of Minnesota and Tribal licensed programs issued a payment for care provided in a single month (October 2011) to a child who was under the age of 5 (as of September 1, 2011) that was also rated in Parent Aware as of December 31, 2011. The original baseline number of Parent Aware-rated programs receiving CCDF funds was an estimate based on data from a survey of all child care programs in the state, conducted by the CCR&R system in 2010.
- Related to **Table (B)(4)c-2**: Revising the baseline number of children in highly rated programs receiving payments from the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). The previous number mistakenly includes children receiving CCAP across all rated child care programs rather than just children in licensed programs with 3 or 4 star ratings.
- Related to **Table (B)(2)c**: Revising the total number of licensed child care programs rated as of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2011 minus the number of licensed child care programs receiving CCDF funds. This change increases the baseline figure. Changing the baseline number of programs means that the target numbers for future years have to be adjusted to maintain target percentages. Because these numbers are inextricably linked, in addition to the change to the total number of programs receiving CCDF funds, there would also be a change to the total number of programs not receiving CCDF funds.

It is our understanding that changing the baseline numbers in the items mentioned above means the target numbers for future years will also be adjusted to maintain target percentages. Other than these

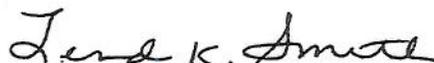
changes, this amendment does not result in a change in your State's performance measures and outcomes, participation rates, and grant activities, nor will delays in spending funds substantially change the scope of work. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department of Education's website as a record of the amendment request and our approval.

We are confident that Minnesota will continue its comprehensive efforts towards building successful state systems of early learning. If you need any assistance regarding RTT-ELC, please do not hesitate to contact your Project Officer, Richard Gonzales, at (202) 401-5138 or [richard.gonzales@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:richard.gonzales@acf.hhs.gov) or your co-project officer, Deborah Spitz, at (202) 260-3793 or [Deborah.spitz@ed.gov](mailto:Deborah.spitz@ed.gov).

Sincerely,



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



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

Cc: Lisa Barnidge