



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



May 18, 2016

Ellen Wolock, Director
Division of Early Childhood Education
New Jersey Department of Education
PO Box 500
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Dr. Wolock:

This letter is in response to New Jersey's request to amend its approved Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant projects. The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the Departments) approved New Jersey's grant projects and scope of work, including supplemental funds, on July 16, 2014. On May 3, 2016, the New Jersey Department of Education submitted an updated amendment request, whereby it proposes to reallocate unspent funds in its Year 2 budget and make several other necessary adjustments.

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 changes are approved, as described below:

Project 1 (Grant Administration): NJ is requesting to transfer \$800,000 from Project 2 into the personnel, fringe benefits, and indirect cost categories of Project 1. This will facilitate the hiring of a full-time business analyst for NJ's data systems project (currently contracted part-time under Project 8).

Project 2 (Aligned Training and Professional Development): Due to a change in the plan to implement NJ's Quality Rating and Improvement System, Grow NJ Kids (GNJK), NJ is proposing to move a portion of incentives funds from Project 3 (\$4,746,800) to Project 2. A total of \$4 million will be used to oversee all aspects of trainings related to GNJK, \$700,000 to purchase curriculum training materials for trainers and participants, and \$46,800 to purchase an assessment tool for GNJK trainers. NJDOE is also proposing to move \$4,009,500 out of Project 2 to Projects 1, 6, 8, and 9, resulting in a net project increase of \$737,300. See those projects for additional details.

Project 3 (Grow NJ Kids Rollout and Incentives Administration): NJ is requesting to reallocate \$4,746,800 from Project 3 to Project 2. NJ is also requesting to transfer \$1,210,000 to Project 8. See those projects for more details.

Project 6 (Family Engagement and Health Promotion): NJ is requesting a transfer of \$300,000 from Project 2 to Project 6. These funds will allow DCF to develop and implement a pilot program to encourage longer-term participation in evidence-based home visiting programs.

Project 8 (Data Systems): NJ is requesting to transfer a total of \$2,710,000 from Projects 2 and 3 into Project 8. Funding from Project 2, \$1,500,000, will adjust for significantly underestimated budgeting for NJ's data

system, NJ-EASEL. Funding from Project 3, \$1,210,000, will support the purchase of a data system dedicated to GNJK as well as support the Workforce Registry.

Project 9 (Preschool-Third Grade Initiatives): NJ is requesting to transfer \$1,409,500 from Project 2 to Project 9 for three activities:

First, \$1,170,000 will support a study of kindergarten through third grade classroom practices. This study will research the efficacy of implementation as well as the needs of kindergarten through third grade classrooms in the State.

Second, \$39,500 will be used to develop a self-assessment tool for kindergarten through third grade programs. NJ's preschool programs currently use a State-developed self-assessment tool on an annual basis to identify gaps in quality and best practices. This companion self-assessment tool will increase alignment between preschool and the primary grades.

Third, NJ DOE is requesting to transfer \$200,000 to update the existing Preschool Guidelines, which were originally developed in 2003. This reassessment of the guidelines will include an expert review and the development of video vignettes to assist in training on the guidelines.

We understand that this amendment request will not impact New Jersey's overall RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure New Jersey can continue to make progress on its RTT-ELC scope of work activities.

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. All budget changes are recorded in the GRADS 360 system and the detailed budget request is saved in the official grant file.

We are confident that New Jersey 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, Deborah Spitz, at (202) 260-3793 or Deborah.Spitz@ed.gov or your co-project officer Richard Gonzales, at (202) 401-5138 or Richard.Gonzales@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