



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



May 2, 2016

Ken Wagner
Commissioner
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Dr. Wagner:

This letter is in response to Rhode Island'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 Rhode Island's grant projects and scope of work, including supplemental funds, on November 14, 2012. On April 4, 2016, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) submitted an amendment request, in which it proposes adjustments to its budget to move unspent funds from 2015 into 2016.

As you are aware, the Departments have the authority to approve amendments to your RTT-ELC plan and budget, provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On July 18, 2012, the Departments sent a "Grant Amendment Submission Process" document to RTT-ELC Project Directors indicating 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:

RIDE has requested to amend its existing budget for the no-cost extension year (Year 5). Specifically, RIDE is requesting to move \$7,720,621 into the fifth year of the grant due to spending delays in Year 4. Most of the proposed changes are moving funds within projects from Year 4 to Year 5. RIDE is also requesting to move unspent funds from Projects 3, 4, 5, and 7 to support additional needs in Projects 1, 2, and 6, as described below.

Project 1 (Overall Grant Management): In Year 4, RIDE spent \$127,250 less than budgeted due to salaries and contract costs being lower than expected. These funds will be carried forward into the Year 5 budget. RIDE is proposing to increase the Project 1 budget for Year 5 by \$299,814. The remaining funds, \$172,563, come from funds not spent in Projects 3, 4, 5, and 7. Additional funds will support salaries for a fiscal officer and an executive assistant at the Department of Human Services, and a temporary assistant at RIDE.

Project 2 (Improving the Quality of Early Learning Programs): In Year 4, RIDE spent \$3,101,396 less than budgeted. These funds will be carried forward into the Year 5 budget. RIDE is proposing to increase the Project 2 budget for Year 5 by \$5,551,543. The remaining funds, \$2,450,146, come from funds not spent in Projects 3, 4, 5, and 7. These funds will support salary for the administration of workforce initiatives at RIDE and the Department of Human Services. Funds will also support TEACH scholarships, TQRIS administration, and development of the final workforce knowledge and competencies document for administrators and education coordinators.

Project 5 (Developing and Supporting Effective Early Childhood Assessment): In Year 4, RIDE spent \$1,299,001 less than budgeted. These funds will be carried forward into the Year 5 budget. RIDE is proposing to increase the Year 5 budget for Project 5 by \$1,228,493. The remaining funds, \$70,489, will

support Projects 1,2, and 6. Funds will support the technical assistance and professional development required for kindergarten teachers and principals to implement the Kindergarten Entry Profile pilot.

Project 6 (Building an Early Learning Data System): In Year 4, RIDE spent \$580,295 less than budgeted. These funds will be carried forward into the Year 5 budget. RI is requesting to increase the budget for Project 6 in Year 5 by \$640,770. The remaining funds, \$60,458, come from funds not spent in Projects 3, 4, 5, and 7. Rhode Island will extend the position for the Associate Director and the existing members of the Office of Network, Information and Systems team to support the project through December, 2016.

We acknowledge your statement that this amendment request does not impact Rhode Island's overall RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, and will ensure Rhode Island 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.

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 Rhode Island 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 Amy Spates, at (617) 565-3772 or Amy.Spates@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