UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

January 9, 2014

Clark Greene
Chief of Staff
Rhode Island Department of Education
255 Westminster St.
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Dr. Greene:

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 approved Rhode Island's grant projects and scope of work on November 14, 2012. On September 3, 2013, Rhode Island submitted a project amendment request and supporting information to the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the Departments).

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 amendments to the State's budget are approved, as described below.

- In Amendments 5.1 and 5.3, the State requests to hire several FTEs across multiple projects and activities.
    - **a.** In Amendment 5.1, the State requests to reallocate $215,197 to hire a full-time staff person to respond to referrals that are received from primary care providers in response to screening results for Project 5, Supporting Effective Child Assessment. This will allow the Rhode Island Department of Health to carefully track referrals and availability of services during the first years of full developmental screening to determine what is needed for sustainability.
    - **b.** The State is requesting to reallocate a total of $1,050,343, in Amendment 5.3, to hire various support positions across the projects. Amendment 5.3 requests the following staffing additions:
        - **i.** In Project 1, Grant Management, the State will add two FTEs to support the CCDF Administrator in leading the overall facilitation and implementation of the RTT-ELC projects and manage the implementation of Quality Awards and other financial incentives.

ii. In Project 6, Building an Early Learning Data System, the State will add one FTE Senior Data System Specialist who will assist in the development of the shared statewide early childhood data system. This person will be responsible for expanding the capability of the DHS' Data Systems.

iii. In Project 7, Improving the Knowledge and Competencies of the Existing Early Childhood Workforce, the State will add one FTE Programming Services Officer who will be responsible for the management and oversight of the Professional Development & Technical Assistance Center contract and related deliverables.

- In Project 7, Improving the Knowledge and Competencies of the Existing Early Childhood Workforce, the State request to reallocate $2,000,000 to establish a Center for Early Childhood Teaching and Learning through a competitive bidding process; these funds are awarded to a state Institution of Higher Education that currently has an early childhood education teacher certification program. This will enhance Rhode Island's work within Project 7 to help align higher education credentials and advance its existing workforce through a career pathway that contributes to high-quality early care and education programs.

The funds, totaling $3,265,540, for these amendments are available due to an excess of $4.7 million dollars that was over budgeted for Project 2, Program Quality Improvement Awards. It is the Departments' understanding that this amendment will not result in a change in your State's performance measures and outcomes, nor will it substantially change the scope of work.

Please note that this letter will be posted on the U.S. Department of Education's website as a record of the amendments. If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding RTT-ELC, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Early Learning program officer for Rhode Island, Tammi Fergusson, at (202) 453-7508 or Tammi.Fergusson@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Libby Doggett
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Early Learning
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
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: Governor Lincoln D. Chafee
Commissioner Deborah A. Gist