UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

April 23, 2014

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

Dear Mr. 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 March 4, 2014 the Rhode Island Department of Education submitted a 6th amendment request, whereby it proposes to increase a key personnel's hours and revise and refine its project 6, Early Learning Data System, budget.

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 amendments to the State's budget and projects are approved, as described below:

- In Amendment 6.1, the State requests to reallocate funds available due to modest savings across all projects and project years to increase the time of the Supporting Effective Child Assessment Team Lead on project 5, Supporting Effective Child Assessment, and therefore increase the amount of RTT-ELC funds used to support the salary. The amendment will be funded utilizing the savings that resulted from being able to more accurately estimate the following budget categories: personnel, fringe, travel, equipment, supplies, and indirect costs; and after adjusting for year one and two actual expenditures.

  Increasing the Team Lead's time allocated to this project is critical to meeting RTT-ELC goals. Amendment 6.1 is directly related to Rhode Island's plan to support effective use of comprehensive assessment systems. The increase in salary will support the work with pediatricians to be able to distribute funding for evidence-based programs to increase children's language and literacy skills, social-emotional development, and family engagement in health settings. The estimated scope of work and associated tasks under the Team Lead's supervision are significantly more complex than initially anticipated. In addition, the Team Lead will need to devote more time to this project for the time remaining in the grant period because the work

that initially was proposed to be completed in 3 years must now be completed in 2 years. All project amounts will be adjusted to support the increase in RTT-ELC funds needed to support the project 6 Team Lead's salary by $45,214 ($22,607 for year 3 and $22,607 for year 4).

- Amendment 6.2 requests to allocate additional funding to complete all of the required programming to enhance the KIDSNET information system at the Department of Health. KIDSNET is Rhode Island's confidential, computerized child health information system, which serves families, pediatric providers, and public health programs. The initial cost estimates for enhancing the KIDSNET information system at the Department of Health to expand collection, display and reports of developmental screening data were based on limited information. Thus, the State requests to reallocate funds to the KIDSNET project so that the project and the associated information system programming can fully capture the breadth and depth of developmental screening taking place in Rhode Island. The KIDSNET enhancement request is $178,258 for year 3 and $92,521 for year 4 ($270,779 total).

  The enhancement will be supported by some of the funds that were initially allocated to Rhode Island's Quality Awards, which are awards given to certain child care programs that commit to operating at higher quality levels. An analysis of estimated expenses, based on current data of eligible programs at higher tiers of the QRIS and the use of the newly developed formula, demonstrates the amount necessary for the Quality Awards was overestimated by approximately 4.4 million dollars. As a result of the budget adjustment, there will be no substantive changes to the Quality Awards program.

We understand that this amendment request will not impact Rhode Island's overall RTT-ELC goals, plans, outcomes, or performance measures, but will ensure Rhode Island 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 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, Tammi Fergusson, at (202) 453-7508 or Tammi.Fergusson@ed.gov or your co-project officer Ngozi Onunaku, at (202) 260-5943 or Ngozi.Onunaku@acf.hhs.gov.

Sincerely,

Libby Doggett
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Early Learning
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CC: Melissa Emidy