UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

September 25, 2013

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 project budget and add an additional activity to Project 2, Improving Program Quality. The U.S. Department of Education approved Rhode Island's grant projects and scope of work on November 14, 2012. On June 28, 2013, Rhode Island submitted a budget and activity amendment request for the RTT-ELC grant 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. Please note that no changes have been made to grant activities:

- In project 1, Grant Management and project 7, Improving the Knowledge and Competencies of the Early Learning Workforce, the State will reallocate $19,800 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Years 2-4 for facilitation of interagency meetings, development of the next phase of Workforce Knowledge and Competency (WKC) Frameworks and for conducting community feedback forums.

- In project 1, Grant Management, SOW 1.3, project 4, Using ELDS and project 7, Improving the Knowledge and Competencies of the Early Learning Workforce, the State will reallocate $120,000 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Years 2-4 for translation services.

- In project 3, Establishing and Measuring Tiered Quality Program Standards for Early Learning Programs, SOW 3.9.7, the State will reallocate $3,773.94 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Year 2 to purchase six laser measuring devices and six handheld infrared thermometers for the Child Care Licensing Staff.

- In project 4, Using Early Learning and Development Standards, SOW 4, the State will reallocate $170,400 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Years 2-4 to support the implementation and dissemination of the RI Early Learning and Development Standards.

- In project 5, Developing and Supporting Early Childhood Assessment, the State will reallocate $65,150 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Year 2 to hire a half-time consultant to work specifically on developing a coordinated set of professional development opportunities that address using Teaching Strategies Gold and achieving reliability status.

- In project 6, Building an Early Learning Data System, the State will reallocate $117,180 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Years 2-4 to supplement the existing staff to enhance planned functionality and support additional operational efficiencies.

- In project 7, Improving the Knowledge and Competencies of the Early Learning Workforce, SOW 7.4 and 7.5, the State will reallocate $71,000 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Years 2-3 to support the development of the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Frameworks (WKC), the alignment of the WKC framework addendum for special education teachers with Rhode Island College's Early Childhood Special Education Master's program, and to hire a consultant to draft a technical paper outlining decision points in the development of WKC process.

- The State will add an activity to project 2, Improving Program Quality. The activity will include the reallocation of $334,000 in unexpended RTT-ELC grant funds from Year 1 to Year 3 to test whether the inclusion of a Pre-K classroom in community-based child care programs and in local Head Start agencies that provide State Pre-K helps to increase the overall quality star rating of the entire child care program as a result of the of the intensive, on-going technical assistance and evaluation that is provided to the program as they implement their state Pre-K classroom.

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