



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

August 7, 2013

The Honorable John Hickenlooper  
136 State Capitol Bldg.  
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Hickenlooper:

I am writing in response to Colorado's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. Between May 7, 2013 and July 31, 2013, the State submitted an amendment request and provided clarification to the U.S. Department of Education (Department). As you are aware, the Department has the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On October 4, 2011, the Department posted on its website a revised "Grant Amendment Submission Process" document indicating the process by which amendments would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Department has applied the conditions noted in the document, and compared it with the Race to the Top program *Principles*, which are also included in that document.

I approve the following changes in the Colorado's Scope of Work:

- In project (D)(2), change the timeline to delay the development and implementation of the evaluation system for other licensed personnel, currently referred to as specialized service professionals. The specialized service professionals include school audiologists, school psychologists, school nurses, school physical therapists, school occupational therapists, school counselors, school social workers, school speech language pathologists and school orientation and mobility specialists. The State originally planned to develop the specialized service professionals' evaluation tools by June 30, 2012 and refine the tools by June 1, 2013. The State Council for Educator Effectiveness (SCEE), a 15 member council appointed by the governor to support implementation of S.B. 10-191, determined the work should be delayed in order to give local education agencies (LEAs) time to focus on the principal and teacher evaluation systems implementation.

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Workgroups with experts from the field in each professional area completed the process of creating drafts of a rubric for each of the specialized service professionals on July 27, 2013. The rubrics will be piloted in SY 2013-2014 and refined by June 1, 2014. The delay in implementing the specialized service professionals' evaluation system does not impact the implementation of the evaluation system for teachers or principals and does not impact other projects in the State's scope of work.

- In project (D)(2), change the timeline to delay the development of two categories of educator evaluation training provider approval: 1) training providers for the State model educator evaluation and 2) training providers for LEA developed educator evaluation systems.<sup>1</sup> The State initially planned to develop the educator evaluation training provider approval process by August 31, 2012 and to communicate the information to the field by October 31, 2012. Additionally, the State planned to initiate the review and approval process for the educator evaluation training providers by December 31, 2012. The timeline was extended to accommodate a delay in creating guidance documents that are necessary for implementing educator evaluation training. Draft guidance was completed and posted on the CDE website during SY 2013-2013 and the final documents will be available by mid-August 2013. On May 1, 2013, CDE released a request for proposal (RFP) for training providers for LEA developed educator evaluation systems; and, as of July 11, 2013, conditionally approved six training providers including large urban districts, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), and the Colorado Association of School Executives (CASE). CDE provided specific feedback regarding areas that need to be addressed by next year's RFP cycle. CDE will release a RFP with the criteria for approving and monitoring training providers for the State model evaluation system and select the providers by December 31, 2013. LEAs may choose from the list of CDE approved training providers for training and support for implementing their educator evaluation systems. In order to minimize negative impact on the LEAs due to the delay in approving training providers for education evaluation systems, CDE staff provided regional State model evaluation system training for LEAs throughout SY 2012-2013 and responded to individual LEA requests for support. CDE staff will continue to provide training and support for LEAs until all approved training providers are selected.
- In project (D)(2), change the approach to share information and resources for 27 districts piloting the State model educator evaluation system. CDE planned to create, monitor and maintain a website solely geared for the pilot districts. After consideration, CDE determined that information and resources to support the pilots in implementing the State model educator evaluation system would be maintained on a unique webpage in the existing CDE website which was added

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<sup>1</sup> Senate Bill 10-191 allows LEAs to choose to implement the Colorado State Model Evaluation System or create their own system as long as the system created adheres to state statute and rules

in January 2013. Additionally, CDE supports networking and problem-solving opportunities for pilot districts by organizing face-to-face convenings where the pilot districts participate in facilitated discussions. Pilot districts also participate in CDE hosted panels and roundtables to share resources, information and data to larger groups of LEAs.

It is our understanding that Colorado will still accomplish within the grant period all of the activities and deliverables articulated in its approved application and the changes will not result in a change in your State's Race to the Top performance measures or budget. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of the amendment.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact Colorado's Race to the Top Program Officer, Cindy Savage, at [cindy.savage@ed.gov](mailto:cindy.savage@ed.gov) or (202)453-5998.

Sincerely,

//s//

Ann Whalen  
Director, Policy and Program Implementation  
Implementation and Support Unit

cc: Commissioner Robert Hammond  
Tricia Miller  
Jill Hawley