



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

May 28, 2014

The Honorable Jack Markell  
Office of the Governor  
Carvel State Office Building  
820 N. French Street 12th Floor  
Wilmington, DE 19801

Dear Governor Markell:

I am writing in response to Delaware's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project, including revisions to the project period to implement a portion of its plan. Between January 31 and May 27, 2014, the State submitted documentation to and held conversations with the U.S. Department of Education (Department) to support amendment requests to its approved Race to the Top plan. As you are aware, the Department has the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided the revisions do not change the overall scope and objectives of the approved proposal. In March 2013, the Department issued "Amendment Requests with No-cost Extension Guidance and Principles" indicating the process by which amendments containing requests to provide additional time for a grantee to accomplish the reform goals and deliverables it committed to in its Race to the Top application and approved Scope of Work would be reviewed and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Department has applied the conditions and elements specific to no cost extensions noted in the document, and compared it with the Race to the Top program *Principles* included in the "Grant Amendment Submission Process" document issued to Governors of grantee States in October 2011.

I approve the following amendments, including an extension to the time period for implementation of several projects, as described below and in the attached table.

- In the Transition to Enhanced Standards and Assessments project, extend the timeline to implement the Common Ground for the Common Core program through June 30, 2015. The Using DCAS Data to Enhance Instruction and SAT and College Readiness projects completed all original commitments under budget; therefore, shift a total of \$800,000 from the Using DCAS Data to Enhance Instruction (\$625,667) and SAT and College Readiness projects (\$174,333) to Year 5.
  - During the 2014-15 school year the State will use \$650,000 to continue to support Common Core State Standards (CCSS) implementation efforts with Common Ground for the Common Core 2.0. The project builds off statewide efforts to deepen CCSS implementation in classrooms, by focusing specifically on formative and interim assessment practices to support the transition to the Smarter Balanced assessments.
  - The State will use \$150,000 in Year 5 to implement the Teacher Leader Project designed to support implementation of the State's new standards by building the capacity of a network of teacher-leaders from Delaware schools. The educators selected will receive stipends and intensive training and ongoing support from the State on the use of materials, tools, and strategies aligned to the State's new standards, and will be expected to share content learned and pedagogical practices with other educators.
- In the Talent Cooperative project, extend the project period to June 30, 2015 to continue to scale this initiative. During Year 4 and the extension period, the State will redouble all Delaware Talent

Cooperative efforts, notably within the talent attraction arm, through use of the project website, a dedicated recruiter, a housing incentive, and direct engagement with the eighteen schools participating in the initiative. Due to early delays in this project (resulting from delays in implementation of the teacher evaluation system), lower than expected participation in the program, and lower than budgeted costs for professional development, the State has reconciled this budget and will shift \$2,122,017 of unexpended funds to five other human capital focused projects (below and see attached table). Within the Talent Cooperative budget, shift \$227,222 in unexpended funds from Year 3 to Years 4 and 5 to reflect refined budget estimates. Shift \$7,717,439 from the Year 4 personnel and fringe categories to Years 4 and 5 contractual to more accurately reflect the funding category for this work.

- Expand investments in and extend the project period through June 30, 2015 for the Teach For America-Delaware project (TFA) and Delaware Leadership project (DLP). In addition, re-invest funding recouped from the cancellation of contracts for discontinued alternative routes to certification initiatives (Delaware Teaching Fellows (DTF), Delaware Talent Management Project (DTMP), and the STEM Residency project), as well as unspent funds from the Talent Cooperative project, to continue to fund TFA and DLP in Years 4 and 5 and support additional alternative certification programs.
  - Specifically, in the Alternative Routes to certification budget (which includes the TFA, DLP, DTF, and DTMP project), shift \$1,055,146 in unexpended funds from Years 1-3 to Years 4 and 5 to reflect refined budget estimates and ending of the DTF and DTMP contracts. Add \$1,022,756 to Years 4 and 5 from unspent funds from the Talent Cooperative project (described above) and the STEM Residency project. In addition to continuing the work of the TFA and DLP initiatives, the State will execute a request for proposals for the establishment of up to two additional alternative routes to certification. During the extension period, the State will establish new contractual agreements with a vendor(s) with a proven track record of providing rigorous teacher preparation, relevant and high-quality coursework, and ongoing observation/feedback for cohorts of teachers prepared to serve in high-need schools and/or in critical-need subject areas. The State expects the annual cohort size for the new alternative-route program(s) to be between 25-75, based upon the needs of the State's schools and districts.
- Extend the timeline for completion of the Partnership Zone (PZ) schools project to June 30, 2015 to align with PZ schools' three-year project implementation plans and to allow the six schools participating in Cohort II to continue to draw down their funds through school year 2014-2015. PZ schools spent supplemental funds slower than expected during the grant period; therefore, the State is approved to shift up to \$2,884,251 from Years 1-3 to Years 4 and 5. This total reflects actual spending of supplemental funding for participating LEAs in Years 1-3 and, in Years 4 and 5, refined budget estimates. In addition, shift \$66,000 in unexpended indirect costs to Year 5 contractual of the Longitudinal Data System project to reflect expected needs.

As described in an April 2, 2014 amendment approval letter, the Department generally approves the State's process to review LEA subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after September 23, 2014. Prior to June 30, 2014, the Department expects the State to submit a record of each participating LEA project approved by the State for a no-cost extension and the total funding approved for LEAs' Year 5 Scopes of Work.

It is our understanding that this amendment and no-cost extension will not result in a change in your State's performance measures and outcomes, nor will they substantially change the scope and objectives of the work. Please note that we are expecting grantees with no-cost extensions to liquidate all funds by September 1, 2015, given that by law all Race to the Top funds revert to the U.S. Department of Treasury as of October 1, 2015. The State must request and receive approval to move forward with no-cost extensions for any additional projects. This letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of these amendments.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact Delaware's Race to the Top Program Officers, Rachael Tutwiler Fortune at 202-205-8651 or [Rachael.tutwilerfortune@ed.gov](mailto:Rachael.tutwilerfortune@ed.gov) or Meredith Farace at 202-401-8368 or [Meredith.farace@ed.gov](mailto:Meredith.farace@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: Mark T. Murphy, Secretary of Education  
Kate Villari, Chief Performance Officer, Race to the Top Delivery Unit

Grant project area affected	Specific project	Description of change
(A)(2): Strong statewide capacity to implement and sustain plans. <sup>1</sup>	Teacher Leader Effectiveness Unit (TLEU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend the timeline for the TLEU to oversee implementation of State projects approved by the Department for no-cost extensions through June 30, 2015.</li> <li>• Shift \$789,054 in unexpended funds from Years 1-3 (due to staff transitions) to Years 4 and 5 to reflect refined budget estimates.</li> <li>• Add \$9,661 from the Using DCAS Data to Enhance Instruction project to Year 5 personnel. The total Year 5 budget of \$683,951 will maintain funding for salaried and contractual positions in the TLEU to continue its work supporting the State's teacher and leader Race to the Top projects.</li> <li>• In addition, shift \$197,058 in unexpended contractual and indirect costs to the Performance Management Team/Delivery Unit (PMT/DU) project (\$87,045) and the Marketing and Community Engagement project (\$110,013) to reflect expected needs.</li> </ul>
(A)(2): Strong statewide capacity to implement and sustain plans.	School Turnaround Unit (STU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend the timeline for the STU to oversee implementation of State projects approved by the Department for no-cost extensions through June 30, 2015.</li> <li>• Shift \$612,172 in unexpended funds from Years 1-3 (due to staff transitions) to Years 4 and 5 to reflect refined budget estimates. The total Year 5 budget of \$429,146 will continue to support the Unit's work in providing technical assistance and holding accountable the State's priority and focus schools.</li> <li>• In addition, shift \$251,793 in unexpended Year 4 personnel and indirect costs to the PMT/DU project (\$165,866) and the Marketing and Community Engagement project (\$85,927) to reflect expected needs.</li> </ul>
(B)(2): Developing and implementing common, high-quality assessments	Using DCAS Data the Enhance Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift \$865,591 in unexpended funds from Years 1-3 to Year 4 to reflect actual expenditures. Shift \$928,724 of unexpended Year 4 funds to other projects. Of this amount, \$625,667 is shifted to the Common Ground for the Common Core budget (described above) and small amounts of funding are shifted to Year 5 of four other projects (PMT/DU, TLEU, Longitudinal Data System, and Marketing and Community Engagement) to reflect expected needs in an extended year. The majority of costs related to the Using DCAS Data to Enhance Instruction project have been absorbed by the State during the grant period, and thus the State will utilize these funds to support CCSS implementation. By 2014-2015, the State expects to make a complete transition to the CCSS and to Smarter Balanced assessments, while fully executing on DCAS implementation throughout all four years of the Race to the Top grant period.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Delaware was approved on April 2, 2014, for a no-cost extension amendment that outlined the State's process for awarding LEA sub-grants in the 2014-2015 school year and the State team to monitor and support LEA implementation, a portion of the State's (A)(2) work. As a part of this request, the Department approved the State's full projected budget to sustain the Delivery Unit in the 2014-2015 school year. The State has since requested the ability to shift the remaining Using DCAS Data to Enhance Instruction project funds (\$93,451 in personnel and \$35,463 in fringe) to the Delivery Unit's Year 5 budget to support the State's LEA performance management work during the 2014-2015 school year, for which is also now approved.

(B)(3): Transition to Enhanced Standards and Assessments.	SAT and College Readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift \$583,914 from Years 1-3 to Years 4 to reflect actual expenditures and billing delays.</li> <li>• Reallocate \$390,360 from Year 4 contractual to Year 4 supplemental funding for LEAs to more appropriately reflect these funds in the correct budget category for funds to LEAs for the Middle School Prep project.</li> <li>• Shift \$174,333 from Year 4 contractual funds to the Common Ground for the Core project (described above). These funds are not needed in the SAT and College Readiness project; DDOE has used State funds for some of this work.</li> </ul>
(C)(1): Data Systems to Support Instruction	Longitudinal Data System (LDS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend the timeline to implement the LDS project through June 30, 2015.</li> <li>• Shift a total of \$154,528 from Years 2 and 3 to Year 4 to reflect actual expenditures.</li> <li>• Add \$426,692 to Year 5 contractual from unspent funds other projects (Teacher Prep Grants, Using DCAS Data to Enhance Instruction, Academic Achievement Awards, Partnership Zone). In Year 5, funds will support updated versions of the LDS, maintenance costs that have not yet been fully absorbed via State funding, and ongoing efforts to integrate these data sources into more classrooms and Professional Learning Communities.</li> </ul>
(D)(1): Alternative Routes to Educator Certification	STEM Residency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift \$198,688 from Years 1-3 contractual to Year 4 to reflect actual expenditures. Then shift \$433,564 out of Year 4 contractual (and decreasing the overall budget by that amount) to the Alternative Certification project. These Year 4 funds are no longer needed in the STEM Residency program as a result of the termination of this contract in 2013. While Delaware has not met its goal of 100 STEM teachers through the STEM Residency program, it will continue striving towards meeting this goal through its other alternative certification programs in Year 5.</li> </ul>
(D)(2): Ensuring rigorous annual evaluations	Development Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend the timeline to implement the Development Coaches project through June 30, 2015.</li> <li>• Shift \$179,384 in unexpended funds from Years 1-3 to Years 4 and 5 to reflect refined budget estimates.</li> <li>• Shift \$8,791 of unspent indirect costs to the Marketing and Community Engagement project.</li> <li>• Add \$639,044 to Year 5 contractual from the Talent Cooperative project's unspent Year 4 contractual funds. The State provided eight to ten coaches in Years 2 and 3 to work with 70-100 schools one-on-one at any given time, and continued the Development Coach Project in Year 4 of the grant period, providing seven coaches to work with approximately 64 schools. The State has received feedback from the field that Development Coaches were instrumental in the roll-out and support of teacher evaluation implementation. In Year 5, the State will continue to serve 40-60 schools with eight coaches, based upon continued LEA demand and LEA ability to support this effort with local resources.</li> </ul>
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers	Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey (TELL-Delaware)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add \$200,000 contractual funds to Year 5 of a new TELL-Delaware Survey budget from the Talent Cooperative project's unspent Year 4 contractual funds.</li> <li>• The State committed to commissioning a statewide Teaching and Learning Conditions Survey, which will be analyzed to identify the most critical issues, and potential course of redress, for improving school environments. Using State funds, Delaware administered the "TELL-Delaware Survey" in January 2013</li> </ul>

and principals		and the data and tool have been used widely at the State and LEA-levels. The State believes this work has the merit to be sustained using Race to the Top funds due to project success and LEA demand for the initiative. The State is approved through June 30, 2015 to implement this project.
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	Web Portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend the timeline to implement the Statewide Educator Recruitment Portal project through June 30, 2015. Note that there are no budget implications.</li> </ul>
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	Marketing and Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend the timeline to implement the Marketing and Community Engagement project through June 30, 2015.</li> <li>Shift \$126,454 in unexpended funds from Years 1-3 to Years 4 and 5 to reflect refined budget estimates for the continuation of marketing efforts, and add \$245,007 to Year 5 contractual from unspent indirect costs from eight other projects. These funds in Years 4 and 5 will allow the State to inform parents, families, businesses, and students about improvements made during the grant period and develop a parent portal to create additional transparency for parents and communities, thereby supporting their increased engagement in public education.</li> </ul>
(D)(3) Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals	Academic Achievement Awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend the timeline to implement the Academic Achievement Awards project through June 30, 2015 due to project delays. Awards are made using the previous year's data; therefore, school year 2013-2014 awards will be made by the State in fall 2014. In addition, fewer schools were identified than estimated.</li> <li>Shift \$1,035,844 from Years 3 to Years 4 and 5.</li> <li>Shift \$186,696 from Year 4 contractual and \$19,800 from Years 2 – 4 indirect to LDS.</li> <li>In Year 5, the State will name at least two Reward Schools (at \$150,000 per school) and up to fifteen Recognition Schools (at up to \$150,000 per school) in summer 2014 based upon end-of-year achievement data.</li> </ul>
(D)(4): Improving preparation programs <sup>2</sup>	Teacher Preparation Grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend the timeline to implement the Teacher Preparation Grants project through June 30, 2015. This is a shift in timeline due to staffing transitions and data availability. In addition, the State's implementation timeline for this project was revised to align with the roll-out of State legislation regarding teacher preparation programs (SB51).</li> <li>Shift \$300,000 in unexpended funds from Years 1-3 (due to project delays) to Years 4 and 5 to reflect refined budget estimates.</li> <li>Shift \$50,000 to Year 5 the LDS project, thereby decreasing the overall budget by that amount and aligning the budget with the actual grant amounts needed for two awards.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> The State also indicated that it plans to pursue a no cost extension amendment to address outstanding (D) (4) commitments related to publicly reporting local preparation programs' effectiveness data.

(D)(4): Improving preparation programs	Human Capital Analytics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift \$300,000 from the Talent Cooperative budget to fund the Human Capital Analytics work in Year 5 to continue the work completed in this project to date.</li> <li>• Over the past three years, much of the State's work in Human Capital Analytics has been driven by Delaware's partnership with the Harvard Strategic Data Project. While this initiative has been largely funded by philanthropic contributions, the State will continue and grow this partnership, using Race to the Top funds through June 30, 2015. This will include building internal capacity with another Agency Fellow from Delaware's Higher Education Office and onboarding up to two Data Fellows from around the country. The acquisition of talent and the continuation of the State's partnership will lead to College-Going Diagnostic 2.0, Human Capital Diagnostic 2.0, program evaluation of Race to the Top projects such as the Delaware Talent Cooperative, the Year 2 Report on Educator Evaluation, the analysis of survey data, developing data systems for incomplete projects such as exit surveys and vacancy/attrition analysis, and the overall sustainability of human capital data systems within the Department.</li> </ul>
(D)(5): Providing effective support to teachers and principals	Comprehensive Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend the timeline to implement the Comprehensive Professional Development project through June 30, 2015.</li> <li>• Shift \$560,160 in unexpended funds from Years 1-3 to Years 4 and 5 to reflect refined budget estimates.</li> <li>• Add \$393,781 from Talent Cooperative project to sustain the comprehensive professional development work for an additional year. While the scope of services will remain the same as with previous years, there will be a reduced cost for the State because LEAs and schools will share a portion of the Year 5 costs.</li> </ul>