



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

October 3, 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, including revisions to the project period to implement a portion of its plan. As you are aware, the U.S. Department of Education (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. 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. 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.<sup>i</sup>

Delaware requested an amendment to sub-criterion (D)(2), Improving Teacher and Principal Effectiveness Based on Performance. As articulated in a July 15, 2011, amendment approval letter, in school years (SY) 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) implemented all components of its evaluation system across all Race to the Top participating local educational agencies (LEAs). As such, educators of tested and non-tested grades and subjects received an evaluation that incorporated all five components of its Delaware Performance Appraisal System (DPAS II). One of the five components is a student growth component that includes the State assessment outcomes as a key measure. In response to the request to make changes to the State's teacher and principal evaluation system implementation, the Department approves the following amendment, with conditions described below.

- In SY 2014-2015, the State will use Smarter Balanced assessments as Measure A of Component V (the student growth component) as previously planned; however, in SY 2014-2015 this measure will be considered an informational measure and will not be factored into educator and administrators' Component V ratings. All educators will continue to have multiple measures of student growth for Component V, and in SY

2014-2015 administrators and Group 1 educators (educators teaching tested grades and subjects), the two groups affected by this transition year plan, will have a Component V rating that includes two Measure B data points. (Measure B data points are derived from State-approved content specific assessments.) In SY 2014-2015 only, this Component V rating will be the rating of record and used for human capital decisions such as retention, promotion, compensation, and support. During Year 5, DDOE also anticipates continuing to develop and refine the State's Student Growth Measures and will engage Delaware educators during this process.

Conditions: As a condition of approval for this project, DDOE must:

1. Ensure that it remains on track to implement teacher and principal evaluations as described above as well as Principle 3 of its flexibility under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA Flexibility), including the following assurances:
  - a. In addition to continuing to implement their educator evaluation systems, DDOE or its LEAs will calculate student growth data based on State assessments during the transition year for all teachers of tested grades and subjects, in order to ensure and improve DDOE and/or LEA capacity to make these calculations in an accurate manner going forward; and
  - b. Each teacher of a tested grade and subject and all principals will receive their student growth data based on State assessments for SY 2014-2015 in order to provide educators with all available information and build a deeper understanding of the information and its uses.
2. Ensure that Delaware's new State assessments are used for Measure A of Component V beginning in SY 2015-2016.

This amendment is consistent with Secretary Duncan's August 2014 announcement that State educational agencies (SEAs) that are approved for ESEA flexibility are eligible for additional flexibility to not include student growth on State assessments in teacher and principal evaluation and support systems during the year of transition to new assessments.

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.

Please note that we have shared this information with the Office of School Turnaround because it may impact Delaware's implementation of its School Improvement Grant (SIG). We encourage you to contact David Yi at (202) 453-5674 or [David.Yi@ed.gov](mailto:David.Yi@ed.gov) regarding Delaware's SIG requirements. This letter will be posted on the Department's website. 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 Officer, Rachael Tutwiler Fortune, at (202) 205-8651 or [Rachael.tutwilerfortune@ed.gov](mailto:Rachael.tutwilerfortune@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

//s//

Patrick Rooney  
Acting Director, Policy and Program Implementation  
Implementation and Support Unit

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

Grant project area(s) affected	Specific project	Description of change
(A)(2): Strong statewide capacity to implement and sustain plans.  (C)(1): Data Systems to Support Instruction.	Delivery Unit (DU)  Longitudinal Data System (LDS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the project management office’s (PMO’s) DU budget, shift \$94,171 from the Year 4 budget to Year 5 to reflect actual expenditures. In addition, shift into Year 5 contractual of the DU budget, a combined total of up to \$157,227, from the contractual line of the Delaware TELL-Survey, School Turnaround Unit, and Using DCAS Data to Enhance Instruction budgets and from the Other category of the Teacher Preparation Grants budget to reflect actual Year 4 expenditures and Year 5 budget estimates. These funds will be leveraged to ensure the State’s capacity to improve the extent to which State performance- and accountability-related data (e.g., chronic absenteeism, social-emotional indicators, and data reflecting whether students are off track for graduation) are accessible to local stakeholders through its Ed-Insight Dashboard Portal. The State will develop district-level, school-level, and parent-level interfaces that are explicitly linked to such accountability measures. During Year 5, the State will also conduct stakeholder engagement activities to ensure the interface meets stakeholder needs. This work is approved from June 30, 2014, to June 30, 2015.</li> </ul>
(B)(3): Transition to Enhanced Standards and Assessments.	Transition to Enhanced Standards and Assessments project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the Advanced Placement (AP) Summer Institute project budget, shift up to \$238,000 in unexpended funds from Year 4 to Year 5 for the State to implement the following activities from June 30, 2014, to June 30, 2015. The State completed all original commitments for its AP Summer Institute project under budget and developed a sustainability model to support AP summer training. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The State will fund professional development for up to 30-50 teacher-leaders who will lead the State’s shift to new standards and assessments through the Delaware Dream Team. Such professional development will prepare these teacher-leaders to continue to build formative assessment items aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in Year 5.</li> <li>○ The State will provide support for up to 36 of its AP teachers through AP-Insight, a job-embedded and data-rich professional development system created by the College Board to addresses areas of struggle for AP teachers and students.</li> <li>○ The State will also continue its vertical teaming initiative by funding the College Board to provide coaching and support to secondary teachers in an effort to build strong college and career readiness pathways from middle school to high school,</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<p>culminating with successful student completion and passage of AP courses and exams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In addition, the State will use data from the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) and the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) to identify students who have demonstrated readiness for AP courses and grant them access to curricula for courses not offered at their schools through the Amplify Computer Science Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and online courses, with priority going to AP courses in the STEM fields.</li> </ul>
(B)(3): Transition to Enhanced Standards and Assessments.	Middle School Prep program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In the SAT and College Readiness budget, shift \$48,164 of unexpended Year 4 contractual and \$67,542 of unexpended Year 4 supplemental funding for participating LEAs to Year 5 of those same funding categories to reflect actual expenditures in Year 4. The State will leverage these funds to support continued LEA Middle School Prep program implementation from June 30, 2014, to June 30, 2015. In Year 5, the State will conduct an evaluation of LEA implementation of the program. Based on the evaluation results, the State will select up to six LEAs to continue implementing the program.</li> </ul>
(C)(3): Using Data to Improve Instruction.	PLC Support System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shift \$650,000 from Year 5 contractual of the Development Coach project to Year 5 contractual of the Data Coach project to implement the Professional Learning Community (PLC) Support System from June 30, 2014, to June 30, 2015. The PLC Support System was previously referred to as the Data Coach Project, and in Year 5, the State will use these coaches to continue support for up to 50 schools to improve educator use of data to improve instruction during the required 90 minutes of PLC collaborative planning time, with an increased focus on the State's new standards and assessments. The State previously requested funding for the Development Coach project in Year 5, but it identified State resources to sustain this initiative for SY 2014-2015. The State remains committed to leveraging development coaches to continue to improve DPAS II implementation in Year 5.</li> </ul>
(D)(3): Ensuring Equitable Distribution of Effective Teachers and Principals.	Advancing Educator Compensation and Careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shift \$185,000 from Year 5 contractual of the Delaware Talent Cooperative project to Year 5 contractual of the Advancing Educator Compensation and Careers project for the State to implement a sustainability initiative geared towards recognizing and rewarding high-performing teachers working in Delaware public schools. The State established the Committee to Advance Educator Compensation and Careers (CAECC), which is charged with developing an alternative compensation structure and career pathway for Delaware public school educators. This work will build on Delaware's Talent Cooperative project by focusing on the retention, attraction, and compensation of effective educators, and according to the</li> </ul>

		<p>State, the CAECC's recommendations will emphasize the needs of high-need schools. The State will utilize these funds to hire a contractor to increase its capacity to bridge policy to practice and engage stakeholders around this new initiative in Year 5. The State believes this initiative has the potential to drive powerful and long-term change, and that shifting these funds will not prevent the State from continuing to aggressively work toward outstanding Delaware Talent Cooperative goals.</p>
(D)(5): Providing Effective Support to Teachers and Principals.	School Leadership Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the School Leadership Coaches project, shift up to \$113,603 in unexpended Year 4 contractual funds to Year 5 contractual to reflect actual expenditures. The State will continue to fund principal training and support through the Relay Graduate School of Education's (GSE) National Principal Academy Fellowship (NPAF) from June 30, 2014, to June 30, 2015. The majority (13 of 15) of the Delaware principals who enrolled in the NPAF in Years 3 and 4 graduated from the yearlong program. The State will use these funds to provide NPAF training and support to 10 additional Delaware principals in Year 5. These principals will participate in four weekend long rigorous training opportunities. Upon graduation, they will also receive one-year of credit towards the completion of a master's degree through the Relay GSE and gain access to additional support through the broader Relay network.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>The State is also approved for a technical change to shift its official end of four-year Race to the Top grant period to June 30, 2014, enabling the State to report its Year 4 expenditures and data for a timeframe consistent with Years 1-3. Originally, Delaware's official grant period was scheduled to end on June 13, 2014, presenting reconciliation and accounting challenges for the State.