



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

February 22, 2013

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. Between August 15, 2012, and January 31, 2013, the State submitted documentation to and held conversations with the U.S. Department of Education (Department) staff in the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU) 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 that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On October 4, 2011, the Department sent a letter and revised "Grant Amendment Submission Process" document to Governors of grantee States 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.

Delaware's approach to accelerating improvements in high-need schools includes recruiting, training, and retaining highly-effective teachers and leaders through the "Delaware Fellows/Talent Attraction" and the "Retention Bonuses/Talent Retention" projects. Based on lessons learned from the first two years of implementation and input from Delaware's Race to the Top Advisory Council and educator focus groups conducted during fall 2012, the State has determined that refinements are needed to meet the goals of these projects.

The State will merge the "Delaware Fellows/Talent Attraction" and the "Retention Bonuses/Talent Retention" projects into a new project, the "Delaware Talent Cooperative" and create a new project "Student Growth Measures," to support DPAS-II, Component V initiatives. The State believes these shifts will result in a greater distribution of highly-effective teachers and school leaders in high-need schools in Delaware, a belief informed by educator feedback and advisory council input.

I approve the following amendments:

- Student Growth Measures
 - In order to develop 283 measures/assessments for DPAS-II, Component V, the State will shift a total of \$600,000 (\$479,655 from personnel and \$120,345 benefits) from Year 2 of the “Retention Bonuses/Talent Retention” project to Years 3 and 4 contractual of the “Student Growth Measures” project. The State does not expect a reduction in personnel funds will substantially impact its ability to meet the “Retention Bonuses/Talent Retention” project performance measures. In addition, the State believes additional resources devoted to developing student growth measures will enhance Delaware’s ability to meet its teacher effectiveness performance measures.

- Delaware Talent Cooperative
 - Retention Bonuses/Talent Retention
 - The State will shift \$2,380,845 from Years 2 and 3 to Year 4 personnel and \$594,415 from Years 2 and 3 to Year 4 benefits. Both shifts are due to project implementation delays and fewer initial host schools participating in the program than expected, resulting in 102 fewer Year 2 educator bonuses awarded than anticipated.
 - Delaware Fellows/Talent Attraction
 - The State will shift \$200,000 from Year 3 contractual to Year 4 personnel and \$116,346 from Year 4 contractual to Year 4 benefits, \$225,000 from Year 3 personnel to Year 4 personnel, \$58,725 from Year 3 benefits to Year 4 benefits, and \$65,000 from Year 4 contractual to Year 3 contractual.
 - The timeline to select Cohort 1 of teachers, principals, and host schools will shift to March 2013, nine months behind schedule due to delayed implementation of DPAS-II, Component V.
 - Based on feedback from Delaware’s Race to the Top Advisory Council and educators, the State will increase talent attraction bonuses from \$5,000 to \$20,000 annually, paid over two years.
 - Delaware Talent Cooperative
 - The State will shift \$6,214,525 from the “Retention Bonuses/Talent Retention” project to the “Delaware Talent Cooperative” project.
 - The State will shift \$2,503,270 from the “Delaware Fellows/Talent Attraction” project to the “Delaware Talent Cooperative” project.
 - Of the \$8,717,795 now in the “Delaware Talent Cooperative,” the State will budget \$350,000 for Year 4 supplemental funding for participating LEAs to fund a school bonus of up to \$10,000 for school-wide improvement efforts to host schools with at least two educators in the “Talent Cooperative” that can demonstrate at least 50% of the school’s growth targets were met the previous year. Developed in consultation with educator focus groups and Delaware’s Race to the Top Advisory Council, the host school program will reward schools that provide cohesive support to “Delaware Talent Cooperative” participants. The intent of the program

is to support highly effective teachers and leaders serving in Delaware's high-need schools at both the individual and institutional level.

It is our understanding that the amendment will not substantially change the scope and objectives of the work. 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 Delaware's Race to the Top Program Officer, Patrick Carr, at 202-260-0926 or patrick.carr@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

//s//

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

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