



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

March 15, 2011

The Honorable Jack Markell  
Office of the Governor  
Carvel State Office Building  
820 N. French Street 12<sup>th</sup> 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. On January 31, 2011, the State submitted amendment requests 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 January 6, 2011, the Department sent a letter and "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.

I am pleased to approve the following amendments:

- In the "Middle School Preparation Program," adjust the timeline of activities to begin in summer 2011 and continue into the 2011-12 school year with implementation by local educational agencies (LEAs) by August 2012. The Preparation programs will then operate in each LEA's middle schools for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years. In its application, Delaware proposed to implement these programs in its middle schools by the end of the 2010-11 school year (SY). This shift in timeline will allow Delaware to complete an RFP process with additional information about the needs of the LEAs that will use this service. The total budget amount for the project has not changed, however, the budget of \$927,362 will be used across three years instead of four years.
- In the "Longitudinal data system (LDS)" project, clarify and adjust timelines. The complexity of these projects across the many "customers" who will utilize this data led Delaware to take additional steps to gather as much information as possible before crafting the RFPs, thus delaying the project. The Request for Proposal process for this project will be separated for the LDS Warehouse portion of the project and the LDS Dashboard portion of the project. Specifically, Delaware will:

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- Complete the LDS Warehouse development in August 2011;
  - Complete the Teacher's Dashboard in March 2012; and
  - Complete the expansion of the Dashboard to support other user groups by March 2013.
- In the application, Delaware proposed establishing the Enterprise Data Warehouse Governance Council and the K-12 Instructional Data Warehouse Governance Council. Upon further engagement with related stakeholders, Delaware now proposes to use a previously existing body to accomplish the goal of proper data governance related to their longitudinal data system, rather than establish new structures. Delaware currently has a P-20 Council which serves as the governing body for such data issues. Within this P-20 Council rests a currently existing data committee, which will be used in lieu of the two proposed councils.
  - In the “Professional Development Certification System” project, shift the completion date to August 2011. In its application, Delaware proposed completing the system by November 2010 and launching it by February 2011. As a result of feedback from stakeholders during project planning meetings, the Delaware project team determined it was necessary to go through the formal standards adoption procedures and make improvements to the existing professional development tracking software, thus delaying the completion of the project.
  - In the “Data coaches” project, hiring the vendor took longer than anticipated. In addition, Delaware’s previous budget estimates did not include sufficient funds to attract high quality applicants. As a result, the following changes will be made to the State’s plan:
    - Change in the deployment timeline for the first cohort of coaches. Delaware will pilot the project in March 2011 (rather than January 2011, as proposed). The second wave of coaches will be deployed in August 2011, as originally planned.
    - Adjust the data coach deployment strategy. Schools will have access to data coaches through two methods: (a) direct facilitation of collaborative planning time and (b) data coaches working with current LEA instructional and data coaches in a “train-the-trainer” model, rather than only through direct facilitation, as originally proposed. [Delaware notes that this change should result in a more sustainable impact.]
    - Decrease the total number of data coaches deployed during the grant period. A cohort of 5 coaches will be deployed for the first two years (as part of a pilot of this project) and 24 will be deployed for the second and third years of the project. There will be a total of six fewer data coaches in these two cohorts of data coaches. Adjust the optional performance measure to reflect this change. This change would not affect the number of schools that could be served by this project.
    - Addition of \$843,138 to support this project. To cover these additional costs: (a) reduce the budget of the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Unit’s contractual expense by \$400,000 (\$100,000 each year for four years); (b) reduce the budget of the Performance Management Unit’s contractual expense by \$400,000 (\$100,000 each year for four years); and reduce the budget of the Web Portal and Marketing budget for FY 2011 by \$43,138.
  - In the implementation of the “Instructional Improvement System (IIS),” extend the completion date. Delaware will have an IIS system in place in its LEAs by the end of the 2010-11 SY, rather than by January 2011 as originally proposed. In determining the criteria for a successful IIS, Delaware will work with the vendor for the “Data Coaches” project to provide input. The delay in choosing a vender caused the delay in this project timeline.

- In the “Development Coaches” project, hiring the vendor took longer than anticipated. In addition, Delaware’s previous budget estimates did not include sufficient funds to attract high quality applicants. As a result, the following changes will be made to the State’s plan:
  - Adjust the deployment timeline. Begin the work of the coaches in August 2011, thus conducting this initiative during two complete academic years, rather than beginning in the middle of a school year. (The application proposed starting the coaches in January 2011.)
  - Decrease the total number of development coaches deployed (12 instead of 15, as proposed in the application). Adjust optional performance measure to reflect this decrease. [Delaware notes that all assessors will receive training, but the on-site coaching will be differentiated based on need.]
  - The budgeted amounts from years 1 and 2 are moved to years 2 and 3.
- In the “Leadership training” project, adjust the timeline such that the first cohort will begin their participation in the state’s leadership development model in August 2011, and the second cohort in August 2012. Originally, the State’s application proposed that the first cohort would begin in the Spring of 2011, with additional cohorts launching by Fall of 2012. Planning the design of the leadership training will take longer than anticipated. There will be no change in the total budget for this program, however, there will be movement of dollars out of FY 2011 into later years to align with the revised timeline.
- In the “Partnership Zone Schools” project, adjust the schedule by which Delaware will include schools in the Partnership Zone. The total number of schools remains 10 over the life of the grant, but one of those 10 will be included in the Partnership Zone a year earlier than originally planned. Adjust the relevant performance measure to reflect this change.

It is our understanding that the amendments will not substantially change Delaware’s scope of work. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department’s website as a record of the amendment(s).

I am confident that Delaware will continue its bold, comprehensive reform efforts. 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, Meredith Farace, at 202-401-8368 or [meredith.farace@ed.gov](mailto:meredith.farace@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

//s//

Ann Whalen  
Deputy Director, Implementation and Support Unit

cc: Lillian Lowery  
Dan Cruce