



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

June 18, 2015

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

Dear Governor Markell:

I am writing in response to Delaware's June 15, 2015, request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant projects. Between May 5 and June 16, 2015, the State submitted documentation to and held conversations with the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to support amendment requests to its approved Race to the Top plan. ED 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, ED 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, ED 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:

- In the Talent Cooperative project, shift a total of \$1,550,000 in funds unexpended as of Year 5 to support other previously approved areas of the State's plan through July 31, 2015, as described below. Delaware encountered lower-than-anticipated school site participation throughout the grant, and therefore awarded fewer educator attraction and retention incentives than originally planned. As a result, Delaware has reconciled its budget to reflect that total expenditures for this project were less than originally budgeted across Years 1-5.
 - Delaware will shift \$300,000 to continue to sustain the project management office (PMO) in the *Statewide Capacity (A)(2)* grant area in Year 5. Funds will support Delaware's ongoing efforts related to the redesign of the State's consolidated grant application, technical assistance for LEAs, and development of accountability and performance management routines for the State's key reform areas.
 - The State will shift \$250,000 to expand its previously approved Common Ground for the Common Core project in the *Transition to Enhanced Standards and Assessments (B)(3)* grant project area. Delaware will further its statewide effort to strengthen Common Core State

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Standards implementation and the transition to the State’s high-quality assessment, including a focus on formative and interim assessment practices, professional development, and online technical assistance tools.

- The State will allocate \$150,000 to the *Data Systems to Support Instruction (C)(1)* grant project area in Year 5. Delaware will utilize the funds to provide additional support for its data managers through the Data Management and Governance team, which is designed to ensure data quality across the State.
 - In the *Alternate Routes to Educator Preparation (D)(1)* grant project area, Delaware will increase the Year 5 budget by \$150,000 to expand its previously approved initiatives to support innovative educator preparation programs and further invest in school leadership programs.
 - Delaware will shift \$200,000 to its *Improving Teacher and Principal Effectiveness based on Performance (D)(2)* grant project area to further the State’s goals of ensuring rigorous educator evaluations systems. Specifically, the State will continue its support of the Development Coaches project, enhance analysis of data from its DPAS-II educator perception survey, and advance other ongoing continuous improvement efforts to refine Delaware’s educator evaluation systems (i.e., development of the State’s student growth measures).
 - The State will reallocate \$400,000 to Delaware’s *Ensuring Equitable Distribution of Effective Teachers and Principals (D)(3)* grant project area. The State will utilize the additional funds to expand Delaware’s planning efforts to sustain key Race to the Top goals beyond the grant period, including the development of Delaware’s Equity Plan and enhancements to the Delaware Talent Cooperative.
 - Delaware will also shift \$100,000 to its Turnaround Office project in the *Intervening in the Lowest-Achieving Schools (E)(1)* grant project area. Funds will be utilized to provide additional resources for the planning and beginning implementation of interventions in six Priority schools.
- Delaware will also extend its timeline to July 31, 2015 for all other previously approved Race to the Top projects for Year 5.¹ The timeline extensions will allow the State to fully execute its approved project plans before the end of the grant period.

As described in an April 2, 2014, amendment approval letter, ED indicated that it generally approves Delaware’s process to review local educational agency (LEA) subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after September 23, 2014. On August 18, 2014, Delaware submitted 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 ED’s understanding that this amendment 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 ED expects Delaware to liquidate all funds by September 15, 2015, given that by law all Race to the Top funds revert to the U.S. Department of Treasury as of October 1, 2015. This letter will be posted on ED’s website as a record of the amendments.

¹ For additional information regarding Delaware’s Race to the Top projects approved for a no-cost extension, see ED’s amendment approval letters between April and January 2014:
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/index.html>.

Thank you for your commitment to the public education of all children in Delaware. If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact Julie Glasier of my staff at OSS.Delaware@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Monique Chism
Director
Office of State Support

cc: Mark T. Murphy, Secretary of Education
Penny Schwinn, Chief Accountability and Performance Officer
Kate Villari, Performance Management Office