



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

August 27, 2014

The Honorable Vincent Gray
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mayor Gray:

I am writing in response to the District of Columbia's Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)'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, 2014, and August 21, 2014, OSSE 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. 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 the projects, as described below.

- In OSSE Capacity, extend the timeline for training, travel, and supplies to support Common Core State Standards (CCSS) implementation, school improvement efforts, and data-driven instruction until June 30, 2015 (see budget implications below).
- In Teacher Preparation Profiles, extend the timeline for developing the educator preparation profiles to June 30, 2015, and transition the primary focus to target

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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.

effectiveness of educational leadership preparation programs. Originally, OSSE committed to developing Educator Preparation Program Scorecards using data from each teacher preparation program in the State with plans to finalize the scorecard in summer 2011, conduct a pilot study for two years, and begin publication in fall 2014. In October 2012, the Department approved an amendment to shift the completion date to January 2013 and reduce the time period for the pilot study to one year. OSSE will now publish teacher preparation profiles in fall 2014 and additionally, will create scorecards focused on principal preparation programs. OSSE believes this change in focus is necessary because: 1) data indicates a small percentage of teachers prepared in the District of Columbia (District) teach in the District; 2) this small percentage of teachers does not yield a valid statistical correlation between evaluation results and preparation program effectiveness; and 3) District of Columbia public charter school teachers are not required to hold a teaching license issued by OSSE.

➤ Budget 1 Implications:

- Shift \$1,266,103 in unspent funds from Years 1, 2, and 3 to cover actual costs in Year 3 and revised budget estimates in Years 4 and 5. Funds were unspent due to procurement delays and vacant positions at the agency. Specifically:
 - \$743,518 in unspent equipment funds for the Enterprise Grants Management System (EGMS) from Year 2 to Year 3 equipment (\$103,746) and Year 4 equipment (\$639,772), because the EGMS contract was not awarded until Year 3 and work continued into Year 4; add \$12,173 from other unspent funds within this project budget to Year 4 equipment to cover actual costs. According to the State's Scope of Work, EGMS was supposed to be completed in December 2013. OSSE now reports that it will not be complete until December 2014;
 - \$45,500 from Year 4 contractual to Year 5 in the following areas: travel (\$20,000), supplies (\$15,000), and training stipends (\$10,500) to support implementation and improvement efforts; and
 - \$119,034 in contractual funds for the Teacher Preparation Profile Project from Year 2 and 3 to Year 4 contractual (\$100,034) and Year 5 contractual (\$19,000). These unused funds are due to position vacancies and procurement delays.
- Reduce the total Project Budget from \$7,891,446 to \$6,836,946¹.
 - Shift funds from Year 4 of Budget 1 to Years 4 and 5 personnel and fringe within Budget 8 – Expanded Growth Measures (\$300,000) and Budget 12 – STEM (\$200,000) to allow each project lead to have direct management of an assigned project and its associated budget, rather than separating the management of projects and budgets across multiple OSSE staff; and

¹ Based upon revisions approved in this letter, a total of \$400,000 remains unallocated in OSSE's overall budget requiring additional amendment(s) for Department review.

- Shift \$154,500 to Year 4 contractual within Project Budget 8 - Expanded Growth Measures, as described below.
- In Standards Communication, OSSE extends the timeline and development of the LearnDC website to June 30, 2015. This timeline extension will allow OSSE to continue the work in publicly sharing on the LearnDC Website guidance and information on the newly adopted Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), CCSS-aligned support resources, and teacher and leader effectiveness strategies and resources for non-tested grades and subjects and special populations. In addition, OSSE will expand on this work by utilizing a vendor to provide training to OSSE staff for the purposes of: 1) supporting educators in CCSS implementation and 2) supporting training for principals, teacher leaders, and curriculum developers. The vendor will also support OSSE by providing best practices and resources to further strengthen the LearnDC website.
- Budget 2 Implications:
 - Shift \$311,841 in unspent contractual funds from Years 1 and 2 to Year 3 contractual (\$150,823), Year 4 contractual (\$65,000), and Year 5 contractual (\$95,518). These funds were unspent due to procurement and timeline delays; and
 - Add \$336,696 of unspent contractual funds from Budget 7 - Statewide Growth Measures to Year 5 contractual, thereby increasing the overall project budget from \$499,923 to \$836,619. These funds are available based on actual expenditures in Budget 7.
- In Instructional Improvement Systems (IIS), the agency extends the timeline for one subgrant to support its IIS consortium to January 31, 2015. In Year 1, OSSE awarded four subgrants to support local education agencies (LEAs) in building quality data systems. Leadership transitions within one subgrantee resulted in delays to this project. The four-month extension will allow the Lead LEA of that subgrantee to provide support and training to member LEAs as well as complete the consortium's sustainability plan for the project.
- Budget 5 Implications: OSSE revises annual allocations to reflect actual expenditures. In the supplemental funds to participating LEAs category, shift \$808,262 from Year 3 and \$348,281 from Year 4 to Year 2 (\$1,028,523) and Year 5 (\$128,020).
- In Expanded Growth Measures, OSSE extends the timeline for developing and piloting Expanded Growth Assessments to June 30, 2015. In Year 3, OSSE awarded two competitive subgrants for the development and piloting of Expanded Growth Assessments in non-tested grades and subjects. The timeline extension will allow one subgrantee to contract with a statistical consultant to conduct additional analyses of the assessment and improve alignment to the statewide assessment. In July 2013, OSSE awarded a second subgrant focused on the development and piloting of a social studies assessment aligned to the Common Core State Standards

(CCSS). The subgrantee planned to complete this work in Year 4, but faced hiring delays. As a result, this subgrantee will develop items and conduct field testing in Year 5.

➤ Budget 8 Implications:

- In the supplemental funds for participating LEAs category, shift \$500,000 from Year 3 to Year 4 (\$81,250) and Year 5 (\$418,750);
 - Shift \$23,013 in personnel and \$4,986 in fringe from Year 3 to Year 4 personnel and fringe to reflect actual expenditures; and
 - From Project Budget 1 – OSSE Capacity (as described above), add \$300,000 to Year 4 personnel (\$80,000) and fringe (20,000) to support an SLO specialist and to Year 5 personnel (\$160,000) and fringe (\$40,000) to support two FTE's to manage the Teacher and Leader Effectiveness (TLE) and Student Learning Objectives (SLO) work. In addition, add \$154,500 to Year 4 contractual to continue the work on TLE (\$104,500) and professional development to support developing SLOs (\$50,000).
- In Professional Learning Communities of Effectiveness (PLaCEs), extend the timeline to June 30, 2015, for one subgrantee for the purpose of collecting additional program data. In Year 1, OSSE awarded two PLaCEs subgrants to LEAs for establishing consortia with the goal of examining data and creating best practices in order to improve student achievement. One subgrantee has focused on creating lesson study cycles focused on mathematics, English language acquisition, and social studies and making these resources publicly available. This work will be completed by the end of Year 4. The second subgrantee has focused on developing school leaders through site-based coaching and collects program data utilizing the inquiry cycle model. This work will be completed in Year 5. The timeline extension will allow the subgrantee an opportunity to add an additional inquiry cycle and therefore, provide OSSE with additional program data.

➤ Budget 10 Implications:

- In the supplemental funding for participating LEA category, shift \$862,677 from Year 2 and \$703,240 from Year 3 to Year 1 (\$205,468), Year 4 (\$1,170,448), and Year 5 (\$190,000) due to delayed implementation and to reflect actual expenditures.
- In the STEM project, extend the timeline for contractual work to provide content expertise to the STEM Learning Network and support the development and rollout of NGSS to June 30, 2015. The STEM Learning Network includes stakeholders in the STEM system with the purpose of providing a forum for program guidance, development, and best-practice sharing.

➤ Budget 12 Implications:

- Shift \$125,000 in contractual funds from Year 2 to Year 3 contractual (\$25,000), Year 4 contractual (\$30,000), and Year 5 contractual (\$70,000).

These funds are available due to delays in launching the STEM Learning Network; and

- Add \$200,000 in unspent contractual funds from Year 4 of Project 1 – OSSE Capacity to Year 5 personnel (\$160,000) and fringe (\$40,000) to support two STEM specialists, thereby increasing the project budget from \$425,000 to \$625,000. These funds were previously approved by the Department in an amendment letter dated July 16, 2013, and are available due to procurement delays.

As described in a May 1, 2014, amendment approval letter, the Department indicated that it generally approves OSSE's process to review LEA subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after September 23, 2014. On August 1, 2014, OSSE 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 our understanding that these amendments and no-cost extensions will not result in a change in OSSE's performance measures and outcomes, nor will they substantially change the scope and objectives of the work. Please note that we expect 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 the amendments. The State's Scope of Work will also be updated to reflect approved extensions.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact the OSSE's Race to the Top Program Officer, Ariel Jacobs, at 202-453-7025 or Ariel.Jacobs@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: Jesus Aguirre, State Superintendent of Education
Abigail Smith, Deputy Mayor for Education
Sharon Gaskins, Deputy Assistant Superintendent for Accountability,
Performance and Support