



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

March 4, 2011

The Honorable Vincent C. Gray
Executive Office of the Mayor
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 316
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Mayor Gray:

I am writing in response to the District of Columbia's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. On February 11, 2011, the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE) submitted amendment requests to the U.S. Department of Education (the Department). As you are aware, the Department has the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided that such changes do 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.

It is our understanding that the following amendments were based on further review and planning by the District of Columbia since the original application was submitted. We also understand that these shifts will not result in a change in your state's performance measures and outcomes, nor will they substantially change the scope of work. The amendments are as follows:

- Project (D)(4), Improving the Effectiveness of Teacher and Principal Preparation Programs: For sub-project (A)(1), "Collaborate with Preparation Programs to develop a list of information required from LEAs for creating the Prep Program Scorecard," OSSE requested to shift the timeframe for development this list from October-December 2010 to February/March 2011.
- Project (D)(5), which involves supplemental grant funding for LEAs participating in the Professional Learning Communities of Effectiveness (PLaCEs) program: The District of Columbia requested the opportunity to correct an error in its budget in order to align the duration of grant funding with the Race to the Top grant period, which ends in 2014. The resulting change will ensure that both the 2011 and 2012 sub-awards of funding last for two years. (The original budget noted that the 2012 funding would last for 3 years, which is longer than the life of the Race to the Top grant; therefore, we agree that this typographical correction is necessary.)

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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.

- Project (E)(2), DCPS School Turnarounds. OSSE budgeted funds for “planning year grants” for administrative teams implementing school turnarounds in the following year. These funds were budgeted for Years 2-4 of the Race to the Top grant, but the original application stated that the grants would be provided starting in October 2010. To better align the project plans with the budget, OSSE requested to shift the timeline for the beginning of this project to March 2011. It is our understanding from OSSE that the teams operating in the current 2010-11 school year, and scheduled to start turnaround activities in 2011-12 school year, have secured funding from other sources. OSSE has confirmed that this timeline shift will not affect its performance metrics related to school turnarounds.

I am pleased to approve the above amendments. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department’s website as a record of the amendments.

I am confident that the District of Columbia 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 your Race to the Top Program Officer, Rachel Vessey, at 202-453-5545 or rachel.vessey@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

//s//

Ann Whalen
Deputy Director, Implementation and Support Unit

cc:
Hosanna Mahaley
Richard Pohlman

