



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

May 21, 2012

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 (the District) request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. On March 30, 2012, the District submitted an amendment request 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 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. 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 approve the following amendment with the conditions specified below:

For the project area of Great Teachers and Leaders, revise the requirement that participating local educational agencies (LEAs) include student growth as 50 percent of teacher evaluations. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) will now be able to offer participating LEAs the opportunity to apply for a two-year waiver to change the portion of teacher evaluations that is derived from student performance. If granted a waiver, participating LEAs would be able to adjust the portion of a teacher's evaluation that is derived from the common District-wide

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value-added measure (VAM) to a minimum of 30 percent and establish other student performance measures (growth or proficiency) for the remaining percentage that would make student performance equal (VAM plus other measures) to 50 percent of a teacher's evaluation.

The approval for this amendment is subject to the following conditions:

- (1) OSSE develop and submit to the Department by June 1, 2012 a detailed plan for collecting, analyzing, and evaluating data from the various student performance metrics used by LEAs with approved waivers. The plan should indicate how OSSE and LEAs will analyze the data [i.e., variations or consistencies across VAM, student performance metrics, other teacher effectiveness measures (e.g., observation rubrics), and overall teacher effectiveness ratings] to improve the predictive ability of LEA teacher evaluation systems. Finally, the plan should include a strategy for disseminating findings to the LEA community on an annual basis.
- (2) OSSE submit to the Department no later than September 2013 and September 2014 an annual report summarizing the aforementioned analysis and evidence of dissemination to the LEA community.

It is our understanding that this amendment will not result in a change in the District's performance measures and outcomes, nor will it substantially change the scope of 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 your Race to the Top Program Officer, Richard Payton, at 202-453-7698 or richard.payton@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

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

cc: Hosanna Mahaley, State Superintendent  
 Kayleen Irizarry, Assistant Superintendent of Education  
 Khalid Randolph, Director of Race to the Top