July 16, 2013

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 Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)'s request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. Between December 28, 2012 and July 12, 2013, OSSE submitted documentation to and held conversations with the U.S. Department of Education (Department) to support an amendment request 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 that such a change does 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. The amendment requests impact multiple sub-sections of the OSSE's grant and the Department has taken differing approaches for each request.

I approve the following amendment, as described below, as well as the budget shifts in the amendments described in the attached chart:

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400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202
The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

- For (D)(2), Project C: Develop Robust Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems, the OSSE will allow participating local educational agencies (LEAs) to increase the number of performance levels in their educator evaluation systems from four to five provided that they meet the requirements in both the OSSE's Race to the Top application and approved ESEA Flexibility Plan.

    District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) will increase its teacher performance levels from four to five levels (Highly Effective, Effective, Developing, Minimally Effective, and Ineffective). In SY 2011-2012, 68% of DCPS teachers receiving an IMPACT score were rated Effective. Based on two full years of data and a third partial year, DCPS found that the educators earning Effective ratings represented a wide-range of teaching ability. DCPS will add a Developing level and alter the corresponding scores to reflect the additional performance level. Under this new category, teachers rated Developing would be placed on a salary-step hold and eligible for separation from DCPS after three years.

In addition to these amendments, the OSSE has requested to adjust timelines for several projects. The Department acknowledges the following timeline delays and missed milestones related to this part of the OSSE's Scope of Work.

- For (A)(2) Project A: Develop and Acquire New Grant Management System, the OSSE will shift the completion of the Grants Management System from September 2012 to December 2013. The Grants Management System will be utilized across all OSSE divisions and therefore, the OSSE Office of Innovation and Improvement needed agency-wide consensus on the system. The OSSE planned to award a contract to develop the system in March 2012, but it experienced delays in procuring the contract, resulting in the execution of a contract in March 2013.

- For (P)(2) Project A: Develop a DC STEM Learning Network, the OSSE will shift the timeline for the launch of the STEM Learning Network from December 2011 to August 2013. The OSSE worked with a contractor during Year 1 to develop a proposal for the STEM Learning Network, but a contract was not awarded until August 2012, thereby necessitating a shift in the completion date to August 2013.

It is our understanding that these amendments and delays will not result in a change in the OSSE's goals, nor will they substantially change the scope of work. It is our understanding that the OSSE will accomplish within the grant period all of the activities and deliverables articulated in its approved application.

Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of the amendments. 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,

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

cc: Emily Durso, Interim State Superintendent of Education
        Jose Alvarez, Chief-of-Staff
        Iris Bond-Gill, Director of Federal Programs
        Khalid Randolph, Director of Race to the Top

Grant project area affected	Specific project	Description of change

(D)(2)	Project B: Expand Pilot Growth Measure to Additional Grades/Subjects for Teacher and Principal Evaluations	The OSSE will run a new expanded growth assessment competition and hire one full-time employee (FTE) to manage this portion of the project. After releasing the Expanded Growth Assessment Competitive Grant for $2 million in June 2012, the OSSE only made one award for $500,000. Of the remaining funds, the OSSE will (1) use $750,000 to make additional awards[1]; and (2) use $150,000 to hire one FTE for a year and half to run the competition, support the existing consortium, and conduct related research. The OSSE plans to move the remaining $600,000 from this project to fund the following two project-level budgets:
		• Budget Project 1: OSSE Implementation Capacity
		    o Shift $150,000 to hire a project manager for one year to oversee the development and implementation of SLOs across participating LEAs. In addition, these funds will support a contract to design professional development modules and provide technical assistance to LEAs on using existing SLO tools and incorporating SLOs into LEA's teacher and leader evaluation systems.
		    o Shift $150,000 for a contract to support LEAs in the implementation of teacher and leader evaluation systems. In the second year of implementation, LEAs have begun to think about areas for modification and improvement of their evaluation systems. This new contractor would conduct a needs assessment and then design technical assistance sessions for groups of LEAs based on the areas identified.
		• Budget Project 12: STEM
		    o Shift $300,000 to hire two FTEs, and one contractor for one year to support the work in this project. The first FTE will support the implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), alignment of NGSS to the DC CAS, and the implementation of the Educator Leader Institutes for the remainder of the grant. The second FTE will assist in the implementation of CCSS (math), help schools unpack standards, and better align the DC CAS to PARCC. The other contractual position, a full-time Science expert, will provide content expertise to the STEM Learning Network and support development and rollout of the NGSS.

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[1] The OSSE will first run a third round of the competition and then plans to distribute the remaining funds to the existing consortium to enable additional LEAs to join.

Grant project area affected	Specific project	Description of change
(D)(5)	Project C: Support Learning Communities for Effectiveness	Shift remaining funds from Project Budget 10: PLaCEs to Project Budget 1: OSSE Implementation Capacity. • The OSSE will repurpose $400,000 of un-awarded funds from the second round of the Professional Learning Communities for Effectiveness (PLaCEs) sub-grant and use these funds to contract a vendor to develop and implement data Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Based on an LEA needs assessment the OSSE conducted early in the grant, using data was identified as one of the greatest challenges. The original PLaCEs grant was to develop a competitive grant for participating LEAs to join a consortium to engage educators in professional development and collaboration that positively impacts student achievement. Even after two rounds of competition for the PLaCEs sub-grant, there are still many participating LEAs that are not part of a PLaCEs consortium, nor are they part of an Instructional Improvement System (IIS) consortium. With the repurposed funds, all participating LEAs will be eligible to receive funds for data PLCs, however participation will be mandatory for the ten participating LEAs that are not already part of the IIS Consortium project.