



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

August 21, 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 August 7, 2013 and August 20, 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.

I approve the following amendment for sub-criterion (E)(2) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools with the conditions described below.

- Revise Year 2 and Year 3 budgets to \$392,226 and \$789,675, respectively, due to delayed hiring and limited implementation of support to lowest-achieving schools by the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS).
  - The Department acknowledges that the revised Year 3 budget includes \$111,831 for activities related to parent and community engagement in low-achieving schools that took place in school year 2012-2013.
- Revise Year 4 budget as follows:
  - Shift \$1,138,699 funds unspent in Year 2 and 3 to Year 4 to provide support to turnaround schools as outlined in OSSE's approved plan, pending additional information, as described below.

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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.*

- Based on delays to date and revised cost estimates for the remainder of the grant, the State will also reduce the total grant to the DCPS for providing support to its lowest-achieving schools by \$1,831,074. These funds will remain in the Year 4 budget for this project until an amendment request is submitted and approved.

As previously discussed with the OSSE team, it is the Department's expectation that OSSE will submit an updated amendment request including comprehensive, project-level work plans and budgets for the activities in sub-criterion (E)(2). Until project-level plans are submitted by OSSE and approved by the Department, as a condition of this amendment, OSSE's sub-criterion (E)(2) will be placed on cost reimbursement basis effective immediately. Under a cost reimbursement payment basis, the grantee is required to submit receipts for sub-criterion (E)(2) expenditures to the Department for approval prior to drawing down any grant funds. In addition, OSSE must notify the Department prior to obligating sub-criterion (E)(2) funds and must provide documentation to ensure alignment with its approved plan, as requested.

It is our understanding that this amendment 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](mailto:Ariel.Jacobs@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

/s/

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

cc: Emily Durso, Interim State Superintendent of Education  
Jose Alvarez, Chief-of-Staff  
Abigail Smith, Deputy Mayor for Education  
Iris Bond-Gill, Director of Federal Programs