



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

DEC 30 2014

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

Dear Mayor Gray:

I am writing in response to District of Columbia's Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) 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 August and December 2014, OSSE submitted documentation to and held conversations with the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to support amendment requests to its approved Race to the Top plan. ED 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, ED 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, ED 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 amendment for project Data Communities of Practice (CoPs) in sub-criterion (D)(5)—providing effective support to teachers and principals—, including extension of the time period for implementation through June 30, 2015 subject to the conditions described below.

OSSE will expand on its current work in sub-criteria (C)(3)—using data to improve instruction—and (D)(5)—providing effective support to teachers and principals—and implement Data CoPs as well as multiple competitive mini-grant and award competitions that will reward development of high-quality educator-created data tools, professional development, and data-centered resources.

Specifically, OSSE is approved to fund one full-time employee (FTE) for seven months for up to \$58,333 in combined personnel and fringe. This FTE will facilitate the Data CoPs, manage the external partner and support the mini-grant initiative, and coordinate communications about the mini-grant competitions and resources made available through this initiative. OSSE is also approved to fund six mini-grant competitions and associated website enhancements for a total up to \$341,667, as summarized in the bullets below.

- *2013–2104 DC Data Leader of the Year*: Two awards to recognize exceptional talent in data use. Recipients will be responsible for promoting data use, assisting in developing and facilitating professional development sessions, and recording video resources on analyzing and using data to inform classroom instruction.

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<http://www.ed.gov/>

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

- *Data Tool Award*: Up to 40 awards to educators that create an exceptional data tool directly related to key topics of focus of the Data CoP.
- *Start-Up Weekend*: One to two prizes to entrepreneurs with the most promising technology solutions addressing data challenges identified by OSSE and the Data CoP.
- *Data Use Award*: Up to 100 awards to educators to recognize excellent practices in using data. Recipients will record videos discussing how data is analyzed or used in their classrooms.
- *Local educational agency (LEA) Profiles*: Up to ten awards to LEAs that demonstrate exemplary practices in using data to address systemic challenges. OSSE will create profiles documenting LEA recipient practices and these LEAs will be required to share resources, facilitate professional development, and provide technical assistance to the Data CoP. OSSE indicates that it intends that one outcome of the LEA Profiles will be a set of comprehensive resources addressing a specific systemic challenge that can be used by another LEA or school.
- *Best Practices Sharing*: One to two awards to external experts (for example, individuals, or LEAs or charter schools in other States) to share best practices and resources with the Data CoP.

All tools, resources, and videos will be posted for public access on OSSE's resource repository website: www.learndc.org.

Conditions: As a condition of approval for this project OSSE must submit to ED:

1. The memorandum of understanding (MOU) between OSSE and the supporting partner no later than February 1, 2015; and
2. A status report that includes the number of awards made to-date, the category of award, the number of resources developed, and the number of resources uploaded through this project onto www.learndc.org by April 30, 2015.

As described in the May 1, 2014 amendment approval letter, ED indicated that it generally approves OSSE's process to review LEA subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after September 23, 2014.

It is ED's 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. OSSE must request and receive approval to move forward with no-cost extensions for any additional projects. This letter will be posted on ED'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 Patrick Carr of my staff at: patrick.carr@ed.gov.

Sincerely,



Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary

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