



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

MAR 16 2015

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

Dear Mayor Bowser:

I am writing in response to the District of Columbia's Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE) request to amend its approved Race to the Top (RTT) grant project, including revisions to the project period to implement a portion of its plan. On February 26, 2015, the State submitted documentation to 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 ED reviews amendments containing a request to provide additional time for a grantee to accomplish the RTT reform goals and deliverables to which it committed in its RTT application and approved Scope of Work. To determine whether to approve this request, ED applied the conditions noted in the document, and compared your request with the RTT program *Principles*, which are also included in that document.

I approve the following amendments, as described below.

- Shift a total of \$1,638,037 in unallocated funds from Years 4 and 5 of multiple Race to the Top projects to expand work underway in Year 5 for sub-criteria (D)(2): "Student Growth Measure," (D)(3): "Expanded Growth Coverage," (D)(5): "PLaCEs," (E)(2): "School Turnarounds," and (P)(2): "STEM Learning Network." Funds are available due to lower-than-expected expenditures needed to complete grant activities, primarily in the contractual and personnel budget categories. According to the State, projects where unallocated funds were identified have completed the planned scope and objectives successfully or were allocated more funds than necessary and expect to be completed with a revised budget.

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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.*

- Utilize \$150,000 of the total unallocated funds discussed above to expand work underway in Year 5 in sub-criterion (D)(2), “Student Growth Measure,” and extend the time period for implementation through June 30, 2015. The funds will be used to develop a model evaluation system available for voluntary adoption by local educational agencies (LEAs). Based on their analysis of LEA implementation of teacher evaluation systems in the District of Columbia, OSSE believes the development, dissemination, and subsequent adoption of a model teacher evaluation system will increase collaboration and learning among LEAs in the District of Columbia. The development of the LEA model evaluation system will be completed in spring 2015, with pilot testing, to be funded by OSSE using non RTT funds, scheduled to occur in fall 2015.
- Utilize \$20,152 of the total unallocated funds discussed above to expand work underway in Year 5 in sub-criterion (D)(3), “Expanded Growth Coverage,” and extend the time period for implementation through June 30, 2015. The funds will be used to complete work on 6-8 grade social studies assessment item creation and complete necessary 6-8 grade social studies assessment platform maintenance to allow all LEAs to access and utilize the social studies assessment. All item development and assessment system maintenance will be completed in spring 2015.
- Utilize \$420,490 of the total unallocated funds discussed above to expand work underway in Year 5 in sub-criterion (D)(5), “PLaCEs,” and extend the time period for implementation through June 30, 2015. In order to better support educator effectiveness, OSSE will establish a Master Teacher Cadre composed of 40 educators in spring 2015 to partner with OSSE on the design and development of educator programming and professional development. The funds will also be used to provide targeted support to special education educators by creating a repository of resources and organizing a professional learning community in partnership with a District of Columbia Institute of Higher Education.
- Utilize \$757,395 of the total unallocated funds discussed above to expand work underway in Year 5 in sub-criterion (E)(2), “School Turnarounds,” and extend the time period for implementation through June 30, 2015. Specifically, the District of Columbia will: (1) expand the implementation of their blended learning turnaround model from four to six schools; and (2) expand the spring 2015 State System of Support Institute so that additional content can be provided to a larger pool of District of Columbia educators.
- Utilize \$290,000 of the total unallocated funds discussed above to expand work underway in Year 5 in sub-criterion (P)(2), “STEM Learning Network,” and extend the time period for implementation through June 30, 2015. The funds will be used to implement activities included in the District of Columbia’s STEM Strategic Plan. These include implementation of a STEM

Leader Institute and STEM Education Conference in spring 2015. In addition, OSSE will establish a STEM Master Teacher Cadre, composed of 25 educators, in spring 2015 to inform and partner with OSSE on implementation and assessment of the Next Generation Science Standards and Common Core State Standards for mathematics. The STEM Master Teacher Cadre will also support the design and development of educator programming and professional development focused on STEM. Finally, OSSE will expand the DC STEM Network, including initiatives that will promote parent and family engagement in STEM.

- Due to contracts coming in under budget in Year 4, the District of Columbia has an unallocated amount of \$508,953. The District of Columbia will submit an amendment request to ED by March 31, 2015 to propose how to best use the remaining unallocated funds.

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

It is ED's understanding that this amendment will not result in a change in your State's performance measures and outcomes, nor will it 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 RTT funds revert to the U.S. Department of Treasury as of October 1, 2015. This letter will be posted on ED's website as a record of the amendments.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding RTT, please contact Patrick Carr at (202) 708-8196 or [OSS.DC@ed.gov](mailto:OSS.DC@ed.gov). Thank you for your continued commitment to enhancing education for all of the District of Columbia's students.

Sincerely,



Deborah S. Delisle  
Assistant Secretary

cc: Amy Maisterra, Interim State Superintendent of Education  
Jennifer C. Niles, Deputy Mayor for Education  
Sharon Gaskins, Deputy Assistant Superintendent for Accountability,  
Performance, and Support