



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

December 9, 2013

The Honorable Rick Scott
Office of the Governor
The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor Scott:

I am writing in response to Florida's 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 20, and December 9, 2013, the State 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 the revisions do not change the overall scope and objectives of the approved proposal. In March 2013, the Department 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 and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Department 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, including an extension to the time period for implementation of two projects, as described below.

In Sub-Criterion B:

- The State will rename Project B.2.8 to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Professional Development Training and CCSS Alignment Setting for Career and Technical Education (CTE). Work for this project will fall into two categories: a

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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.

December 2013 CTE academic alignment workshop where CTE educators will identify English language arts (ELA) and mathematics CCSS alignment with existing CTE courses and review CTE courses to identify Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) science benchmarks for courses not previously aligned. In spring 2014, the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) will hold CCSS training conferences for approximately 8,000 CTE educators designed to provide professional development on the newly aligned CTE courses. The State will also hire a full-time academic alignment facilitator/CCSS CTE trainer and two part-time support staff through September 23, 2014. To support this work, the State will shift \$3,375,000 of unallocated funds to Year 4 contractual of Project (B)(3)(i), Budget 2, Curricular Tools to Implement the Common Core State Standards.

In Sub-Criterion E:

- In Project E.24.1 – Charter School Expansion with Charter School Growth Fund (CSGF), FLDOE will shift \$10,290,569 from Year 3, moving \$3,107,675 to Year 4 and \$7,182,894 to Year 5. To improve local educational agency (LEA) collaboration with charter management organizations the State will move \$2,000,000 of unallocated funds to Budget #24, shifting \$1,000,000 to Year 4 and \$1,000,000 to Year 5. These funds will be matched with \$2,000,000 in State funds and \$2,000,000 in philanthropic funds. The State’s goal of establishing between 30 and 40 new charter schools by school year 2014-2015 within persistently lowest-achieving school feeder patterns will not be attained due to challenges in attracting high quality charter providers. As a result, the State will open 24 new charter schools by spring 2014. In order to meet the minimum goal of establishing 30 new charter schools within persistently lowest-achieving school feeder patterns, the Department approves a no cost extension through July 1, 2015. Extending the project through summer 2015 will allow CSGF to more fully support the cohort of new schools that open August 2014 and provide start-up support to those schools approved August 2014 and scheduled to open fall 2015.

In order to consider amendment requests with no-cost extensions, the Department indicated that States must address the timelines and implications of the amendment on the 50 percent LEA subgrants (i.e., allocations to participating LEAs), as well as the process the State will use to review LEA subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after the current project period. As described in the July 17, 2013 amendment approval letter, the Department generally approves the State’s process. In addition, consistent with Grant Condition N, unless otherwise protected by law or agreement as proprietary information, the State and subgrantees will make professional development resources developed under this project publicly and freely available.

It is our understanding that this amendment and no-cost extension will not result in a change in your State’s performance measures and outcomes, nor will they substantially change the scope and objectives of the work. Please note that we are expecting 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.

The State must request and receive approval to move forward with no-cost extensions for any additional projects. 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 Florida's Race to the Top Program Officers, Ariel Jacobs, at 202-453-7025 or ariel.jacobs@ed.gov, and Patrick Carr, at 202-708-8196 or patrick.carr@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: Pam Stewart, Commissioner of Education
Linda Champion, Deputy Commissioner of Finance and Operations
Holly Edenfield, Race to the Top Program Coordinator