



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

May 14, 2012

The Honorable Rick Scott  
Office of the Governor  
State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

I am writing in response to Florida's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. From December 2, 2011 through May 3, 2012 the State submitted amendment requests and revisions to the U.S. Department of Education (Department). 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 following amendments are approved:

- In the Standards Tutorial project in sub-criterion (B)(3), expand the scope of the project and reorder the development timeline for the standards tutorials and mini-assessments.
  - In its application, the State proposed to revise the standards tutorials to align with the CCSS and develop mini-assessments for Algebra, Geometry, grade 10 reading, and reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 8. The State has expanded this project to include K-12 Common Core mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) standards and Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS) for grades 5 through 8 science, grades 6 through 8 civics, and Biology I. This provides a tutorial for all grades and subjects with Common Core standards or a statewide standardized assessment.

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- As part of its negotiations with the contractor for this project, the State reordered the development timeline for the tutorials and mini-assessments in order to ensure that the content would be developed and accessible to students by the end of the grant. Due to the high stakes nature of Florida's high school assessments (student must pass the assessments to meet high school graduation requirements), Florida chose to prioritize high school content followed by grades K through 8 content. The previously approved timeline and new timeline are detailed below.

**Amended timeline approved November 2011**

	Standards Tutorials	Mini-Assessments
FY 2011-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algebra</li> <li>• Geometry</li> <li>• Grade 10 Reading</li> <li>• Grades 3-5 Reading and Mathematics</li> </ul>	
FY 2012-2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grades 6-8 Reading and Mathematics</li> </ul>	
FY 2013-2014		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Grades in Reading and Mathematics</li> </ul>

**Amended timeline approved May 2012**

	Standards Tutorials	Mini-Assessments
FY 2011-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biology I</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biology I</li> <li>• Grades 9-12 Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA)</li> </ul>
FY 2012-2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kindergarten-4 Mathematics and ELA</li> <li>• Grade 5 Science</li> <li>• Grades 5-8 ELA</li> <li>• Grades 6-8 Civics and Science</li> <li>• Grades 9-12 Mathematics and ELA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grades 6-8 Civics and Science</li> </ul>
FY 2013-2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grades 5-8 Mathematics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grades Kindergarten-4 Mathematics and ELA</li> <li>• Grade 5 Science</li> <li>• Grades 5-8 Mathematics and ELA</li> </ul>

Elementary and high school content along with middle grades science, civics, and ELA will be available online to students starting in FY 2012-2013. Middle grades mathematics will be available online for student starting in FY 2013-2014.

- In the interim reading assessment project in sub-criterion (B)(3), shift \$500,000 from year 2 to years 3 and 4 of the project. The development of this assessment will be shifting from 2011-2012 to 2012-2013. The State was waiting for item specifications from the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) before it started the revisions to the interim reading assessments. It is the Department's

understanding that now that these items have been received, Florida is proceeding with the project and will roll out the revised reading assessment statewide in 2013-2014 as articulated in its approved application.

- Set targets for sub-criterion (C)(3) performance measures. In its application, Florida established performance measures for sub-criterion (C)(3) but did not set targets for two of these performance measures. The chart below reflects the performance measures and the newly established targets.

<b>Performance Measures</b>	<b>End of SY 2011-2012</b>	<b>End of SY 2012-2013</b>	<b>End of SY 2013-2014</b>
Number of schools receiving professional development per the plan (cumulative)	71	2,800	3,292
Number of new multi-media professional development materials created and made available on the portal	2	2	2

- Revise the sub-criterion (D)(3) performance measure targets.
  - When writing its Race to the Top application, Florida had not yet established its new teacher and principal evaluation systems (which use a value-added student growth model) and thus set its performance measure targets based on what it could postulate from historic student learning gains. In 2011-2012, districts began the process of designing and implementing the new teacher and principal evaluation systems. Through this process, the State determined that its previously set targets did not accurately reflect the expected results of the new evaluation systems. The State found that, generally speaking, the new systems set a high bar for earning a “highly effective” rating and set a low cut score for earning an “ineffective” rating. The State used the information to recalculate its (D)(3) performance measure targets. In addition to this revision, the State also aggregated targets that had previously been disaggregated. The new targets are reflected in the charts below.

<b>Performance Measure</b>		<b>End of SY 2011-12</b>	<b>End of SY 2012-13</b>	<b>End of SY 2013-14</b>
The percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both who are highly effective.	<b>Original Target</b>	R: 22% M:30%	R: 26% M:37%	R: 30% M:45%
The percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both who are highly effective.	<b>Approved Revision</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>15%</b>

<b>Performance Measure</b>		End of SY 2011-12	End of SY 2012-13	End of SY 2013-14
The percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both who are highly effective.	Original Target	R: 31% M:41%	R: 33% M:43%	R: 35% M:45%
The percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both who are highly effective.	Approved Revision	<b>9%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>15%</b>

<b>Performance Measure</b>		End of SY 2011-12	End of SY 2012-13	End of SY 2013-14
The percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both who are ineffective.	Original Target	R: 32% M:28%	R: 24% M:18%	R: 14% M:7%
The percentage of teachers in schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both who are ineffective	Approved Revision	<b>12%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>&lt;5%</b>

<b>Performance Measure</b>		End of SY 2011-12	End of SY 2012-13	End of SY 2013-14
The percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both who are ineffective.	Original Target	R: 20% M:10%	R: 18% M:8%	R: 14% M:7%
The percentage of teachers in schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both who are ineffective.	Approved Revision	6%	5%	<5%

- In its Race to the Top application, Florida left the following SY 2011-2012 targets related to principal effectiveness as “to be determined” until the principal evaluation systems had been revised. In setting these targets, the State also revised the 2012-2013 and 2013-2012 targets to align with the expected outcomes from its new principal evaluation systems. The new targets are reflected in the chart below.

<b>Performance Measure</b>		End of SY 2011-12	End of SY 2012-13	End of SY 2013-14
The percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both who are highly effective.	Original Target	TBD	35%	45%
The percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both who are highly effective.	Approved Revision	<b>3%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>15%</b>

<b>Performance Measure</b>		End of SY 2011-12	End of SY 2012-13	End of SY 2013-14
The percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both who are highly effective.	Original Target	TBD	40%	45%
The percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both who are highly effective.	Approved Revision	<b>9%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>15%</b>

<b>Performance Measure</b>		End of SY 2011-12	End of SY 2012-13	End of SY 2013-14
The percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both who are ineffective.	Original Target	TBD	19%	0%
The percentage of principals leading schools that are high-poverty, high-minority, or both who are ineffective.	Approved Revision	<b>12%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>&lt;5%</b>

<b>Performance Measure</b>		End of SY	End of SY	End of SY
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
The percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both who are ineffective.	Original Target	TBD	9%	5%
The percentage of principals leading schools that are low-poverty, low-minority, or both who are ineffective	Approved Revision	6%	5%	<5%

- In its Race to the Top application, Florida did not set targets for the percentage of science teachers who are evaluated as effective or better. In setting these targets, the State also revised the percentage of mathematics, special education, and teachers in language instruction education programs who are evaluated as effective or better in order to align these targets with the expected outcomes of the State's new teacher evaluation systems. As with the performance measure targets discussed above, in setting its original targets for the percentage of mathematics, science, special education, and language instruction educational programs, the State used historic learning gains to establish baseline data and out-year targets. After running historical data through its new value-added model, the State determined that the differences in student achievement between these groups of teachers were less when using the value-added model than the differences seen with learning gains. Based on this information, the State revised its targets. In setting these targets, the State also made a policy decision to set the same target for all of the identified teacher groups because they believe that with the use of a value-added measure rather than just raw gains, there should not be different goals for these groups of teachers. The new targets are reflected in the chart below.

<b>Performance Measure</b>		End of SY	End of SY	End of SY
		2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Percentage of mathematics teachers who were evaluated as effective or better	Original Target	77%	80%	90%
Percentage of mathematics teachers who were evaluated as effective or better	Approved Revision	65%	70%	80%

<b>Performance Measure</b>		End of SY 2011-12	End of SY 2012-13	End of SY 2013-14
Percentage of science teachers who were evaluated as effective or better	Original Target	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of science teachers who were evaluated as effective or better	Approved Revision	65%	70%	80%

<b>Performance Measure</b>		End of SY 2011-12	End of SY 2012-13	End of SY 2013-14
Percentage of special education teacher who were evaluated as effective or better	Original Target	46%	52%	60%
Percentage of special education teacher who were evaluated as effective or better	Approved Revision	55%	65%	80%

<b>Performance Measure</b>		End of SY 2011-12	End of SY 2012-13	End of SY 2013-14
Percentage of teachers in language instruction educational programs who were evaluated as effective or better	Original Target	68%	72%	80%
Percentage of teachers in language instruction educational programs who were evaluated as effective or better	Approved Revision	60%	68%	80%

- Expand the use of funds in the (D)(2) project designed to help LEAs incorporate evaluation results into career decisions and align human capital systems. According to the State's application, the funds for this project were to be used to support LEAs in their transition to a performance-based compensation model. Since the development of its Race to the Top application, Florida has reevaluated its technical assistance requirements in the Great Teachers and Leaders section of its plan and identified new areas of need. New legislation in the State provided more structure to districts regarding their performance salary schedule so less technical assistance is needed in this area. As a result, the State does not plan to use contractors to provide this technical assistance and will rely on Florida Department of Education staff expertise. The State will continue to use \$2,000,000 to fund this work. Florida will use \$500,000 to provide technical assistance to LEAs for design and alignment of district administrator evaluation systems to LEAs' instructional and school administrator evaluations and district student outcome goals. Finally, using \$7,461,880, the State will provide professional development to all principals on observing teaching of the Common Core

State Standards in the instructional evaluation process.<sup>1</sup> As part of the reallocation of funding, \$1,082,080 in year 3 funds and \$1,153,960 in year 4 funds will be shifted to year 2.

- In the Community of Practice project in the Great Teachers and Leaders section, clarify that at least two (rather than a limit of three) Communities of Practice will be held each year. The amendment also removes mention of the establishment of working groups to provide input and collaboration around the development of a new student growth model and improving the performance of teacher and school leader preparation programs. These working groups have already been established as Race to the Top Implementation Committees and their work is well underway. The travel for committee members is paid from the Administrative project budget in (A)(2). The \$290,080 budget for these working groups was redistributed to support the Community of Practice meetings and the contract for web support for the posting of products shared at the Community of Practice meetings.
- In the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Academy project in sub-criterion (E)(2), revise the projected outcome to more accurately reflect the scope of the project. The original outcome for this project assumed that the addition of a CTE academy in a persistently lowest-achieving high school would have an impact on the entire school. After additional consideration of the reach and purpose of this project, Florida revised the outcome to apply to students in the grant-funded academies rather than the entire school. In accordance with the revised outcome, for each grant-funded academy, by the end of the grant:
  - The single year dropout rate by each grade level will be at least 50% below the dropout rates by grade level for their respective schools.
  - Fifty percent of enrollees will meet or exceed the State average for grade level performance on high school statewide assessments in reading, mathematics, and science.
  - At least 10% of enrollees will have been reported as earning industry certification with a statewide associate degree program articulation agreement.
  - The percentage of graduating seniors who participate in postsecondary education the following fall and are college ready based on Common Placement Test or Postsecondary Education Readiness Test scores will be at least ten percentage points higher than among graduating seniors in their respective schools.

This new outcome more accurately reflects the impact of the academies and will allow the State to manage to an ambitious but achievable goal.

- Adjust the timeline and shift budgeted funds across years in the Recruitment of Promising Teachers project in (E)(2). In an August 2011 approved amendment, the State committed to awarding grants to two LEAs to select partner organizations to help expand the recruitment of promising teachers and place 800 new teachers in these districts by 2014. As part of the amendment process, the State indicated that there would be no impact to the timeline or services outlined in the original application, meaning that teachers would be placed in these districts in the 2011-12 school year. The State and its partner districts did not meet this commitment and now plan to place one-

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<sup>1</sup> One million dollars from this project budget are currently unallocated. Once the State has identified the best use for these funds, it will submit an amendment to reallocate these dollars.



third of the 800 teachers in 2012-13, another third in 2013-14, and the remaining third in 2014-2015. The delay in placing teachers will also lead to a delay in the State fulfilling its commitment to complete research to capture best practices by the 2013-14 school year. This research will now be conducted by the partner districts and will be reported to the State after the 2014-15 school year. As part of this amendment, the State requested and is approved to shift \$240,966 in year 2 funds to year 3 and \$220,583 in year 3 funds to year 4 in order to meet the partner districts' request for funds.

- In the charter school project outlined in section (F) and detailed in budget number 29, shift funds from year 2 to years 3 and 4 and clarify the State's approach to providing services and supports to meet the needs of Florida's charter schools. In its application, Florida proposed to use Race to the Top funds to support the needs of charter schools but did not provide a detailed plan for how this would be completed. After assessing the needs of its charter schools, Florida has determined to use \$1,000,000 for turnaround principal training. The State plans to use an additional \$4,500,000 to provide technical assistance to charter schools on the implementation of teacher and principal evaluation systems. The remaining \$4,500,000 will be used for technical assistance on topics relevant to charter schools such as CCSS implementation and using data to inform instruction. To fund this work, the State plans to shift \$1,366,511 in year 2 funds to year 3 and shift \$1,803,000 in year 2 funds to year 4. Finally, the State is expanding the scope of this project to include all charters rather than just charter schools in non-participating districts as originally proposed.

It is our understanding that the amendments will not substantially change the scope of work. 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 Florida's Race to the Top Program Officer, Lauren Scott, at (202) 205-0940 or [Lauren.Scott@ed.gov](mailto:Lauren.Scott@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: Commissioner Gerard Robinson  
Deputy Commissioner of Finance and Operations Linda Champion  
Race to the Top Program Coordinator Holly Edenfield