



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

June 22, 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. On May 7, 2012 and June 13, 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:

- Shift the statewide roll-out of the mathematics formative assessment detailed in (B)(3) to the 2013-2014 school year rather than the 2012-2013 school year. In documentation submitted in support of its November 2011 timeline amendment for the mathematics formative assessment, Florida stated that statewide roll-out would occur in the 2012-2013 school year. The State has since indicated that that

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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.

the development, piloting, and finalization of the mathematics formative assessment will be complete during the 2012-2013 school year and teachers will have full access to final products no later than the start of the 2013-2014 school year.

- Expand the STEM Career and Professional Academies project in (E)(2) to provide a Microsoft Information Technology Academy at each of 214 middle and high schools. The State has indicated that it believes this program will provide students with needed 21st century technology skills and validate their learning through internationally recognized information technology industry certifications. The funds will be used to provide the curriculum, software and technical resources, access to the Microsoft Certifications exams, and teacher professional development. To fund this activity, the State is shifting \$300,000 from funds originally budgeted for career and technical education (CTE) experts. Because these experts were not hired as early as originally anticipated, funds were freed up that are now being used to support this activity.
- In the (E)(2) Charter School Partnership project, revise the outcome and timeline to reflect that 30-40 new charter schools will be open within feeder patterns of persistently lowest-achieving schools, School Improvement Grant schools, Priority schools, and schools that are designated as “F” schools based on results of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) by the 2014-2015 school year rather than the 2013-2014 school year. Florida law requires all new charter schools to apply by August 1st of each year in order to open one year later. All 30-40 schools would need to apply by August 1, 2012, in order to open in the 2013-2014 school year. To allow more time for recruitment of effective, high-quality charter operators, the State determined to extend the project for another year. The State is also expanding the project so that charter schools will be established not only in the feeder patterns of those schools identified in its Race to the Top application as persistently lowest-achieving, but also in the feeder patterns of School Improvement Grant schools, Priority schools identified as part of the State’s approved Elementary and Secondary Education (ESEA) flexibility request, and schools that are designated as “F” schools based on results of the FCAT.

It is our understanding that the amendments will not result in a change in your State’s performance measures and outcomes, nor will it 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.

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