



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

February 8, 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. On January 11, 2013, the State submitted amendment requests 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.

I approve the following amendments:

- In the "Hard-to-Measure Assessments" project, the State will reallocate \$2,000,000 to develop and pilot an assessment in a hard-to-measure content area. This assessment will be developed by a school district or partnership of districts. This will be in addition to the seven grants the State has already awarded to districts to support the development of assessments in hard-to-measure content areas. The funds for this project will be shifted from the Interim Assessment Item Bank and Test Platform project that came in under budget. The Department's amendment letter to Florida dated November 5, 2012 provides additional information on the Interim Assessment Item Bank and Test Platform budget.

- In the “Mathematics Formative Assessment” project, the State will expand the project from the development of mathematics formative assessments for grades kindergarten through third grade to include grades four through eight, Algebra I, and Geometry. The development of assessments for these additional grades was mentioned in the application but was not included in the project budget. Florida will add \$1,900,000 to the existing mathematics formative assessment contract to complete this work. The funds for this project will be shifted from the Interim Assessment Item Bank and Test Platform project that came in under budget.
- In the “Implement Evaluation Systems for Teachers and Principals that Measure Student Growth” project, the State will provide sub grants to all school districts to train their district and school-based administrators on effective monitoring of their district’s teacher evaluation systems. The awards will range from \$25,000 to \$150,000 and will be based on the number of school administrators in the district. To fund this project, \$4,000,000 will be shifted from the “Improve the Assignment of Effective Teachers and Principals to High-Need Schools” project as described below.
- In the “Assisting LEAs in Using Evaluation Results and Aligning Human Capital Systems” project which also includes Common Core State Standards (CCSS) training, the State will add Race to the Top funds to support additional CCSS professional development activities in Years 3 and 4. The State will host seven two-day institutes in summer 2013 with the capacity to serve 19,500 educators. Additional training will be provided after summer 2013 as the State identifies professional development needs in the districts. To support this work, funds will be shifted within the project budget as follows:
 - \$5,748,259 (\$200,000 from the travel budget for training on performance based compensation systems and \$5,548,259 from the CCSS training budget) will be shifted from Year 2 to Years 3 (\$3,338,189.50) and 4 (\$2,410,069.50). Approximately \$2,800,000 will pay for summer 2012 training expenses that were obligated in Year 2 but not paid until Year 3. The remaining funds are being shifted to support CCSS trainings in summer 2013 and into Year 4.
 - \$500,000 for CCSS professional development follow-up activities in Year 2 that were listed as a separate allocation will be rolled into this larger professional development project for Year 3;
 - \$1,000,000 will be shifted from the training on performance based compensation systems in Year 3 to the CCSS training in Year 3;
 - \$500,000 was taken from CCSS professional development follow up activities in Year 2 and shifted to the summer professional development in Year 3;
 - \$1,000,000 identified as unallocated in the Department’s amendment approval letter to Florida dated May 14, 2012 will be added to the Year 4 CCSS training budget; and

- \$3,000,000 will be shifted from the “Improve the Assignment of Effective Teachers and Principals to High-Need Schools” (\$400,000) and “Improve Districts’ Access to Effective Teachers and Principals in Hard-to-Staff Subjects/Specialties” (\$2,600,000) projects as described below.
- In the “Building District-Level Capacity for Turnaround in Rural Districts” project, the State will extend its work by one year to provide additional support for small and rural districts as they continue their development of strategic plans with a focus on supporting low performing schools. To support this ongoing work, \$991,046 will be shifted from the “Improve the Assignment of Effective Teachers and Principals to High-Need Schools” project as described below.
- From the “Improve the Assignment of Effective Teachers and Principals to High-Need Schools” project, the State will shift funds as follows:
 - \$4,000,000 to the “Implement Evaluation Systems for Teachers and Principals that Measure Student Growth” project for the State to make sub grants to districts to train their district and school-based administrators on effective monitoring of their district’s teacher evaluation systems as described above;
 - \$400,000 to the “Assisting LEAs in Using Evaluation Results and Aligning Human Capital Systems” project to support CCSS professional development as described above; and
 - \$991,046 to the “Building District-Level Capacity for Turnaround in Rural Districts” project to fund continued support for rural districts as described above.

The State originally planned to issue up to four grants to higher education institutions to develop teacher residency models but did not receive the number of high quality proposals it expected and decided to fund only one proposal. As a result, the project is \$8,176,743 under budget and the State has decided to use these funds to support the projects described above.¹

- From the “Improve Districts’ Access to Effective Teachers and Principals in Hard-to-Staff Subjects/Specialties” project, the State will shift \$2,600,000 to the “Assisting LEAs in Using Evaluation Results and Aligning Human Capital Systems” project to support CCSS professional development as described above. This project came in \$5,811,961 under budget because the State anticipated issuing up to four grants for UTeach implementation but only received one request for funding.²

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

¹ Approximately \$2,785,000 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.

² Approximately \$3,212,000 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.

scope and objectives of the 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,

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

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