



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

April 30, 2013

The Honorable Nathan Deal
Office of the Governor
State of Georgia
203 State Capitol
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Dear Governor Deal:

I am writing in response to Georgia's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. Between April 4, 2013, and April 15, 2013, the State submitted documentation and clarifying information to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) to support amendment requests 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 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.

On July 2, 2012, the Department placed goals 1-4 in Section D of Georgia's approved Scope of Work, related to its teacher and leader evaluation systems, on high-risk status under 34 CFR 80.12. As stated in the July 2, letter, the Department is concerned about the overall strategic planning, evaluation, and project management for that system, which includes decisions regarding the quality of the tools and measures used during the educator evaluation pilot and the scalability of the supports the State offered to participating districts. The State has not demonstrated that it is developing and approaching implementation of the teacher and leader evaluation systems in a comprehensive and deliberate manner that includes consideration of dependent deliverables, a structured process for evaluating and incorporating formative feedback, and a communications strategy including all relevant stakeholders. Please note that in addition to the Principles mentioned above, the Department considers Georgia's high-risk status when reviewing amendments.

The Department approves the following amendment for Project 28: Innovation Fund:

- The State will run a new competition to recognize and reward highly effective educators who are innovatively teaching the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards

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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.

(CCGPS) and make their instruction available to all Georgia educators. The Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) led three rounds of competitions for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to apply for Innovation Fund grants; however \$3 million remains. The new competition is aligned with the original goals of the Innovation Fund. For the new competition, through a partnership with Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB), GOSA will record videos of educators teaching high-quality lessons aligned with the CCGPS and make them available for all Georgia educators on the State's longitudinal data system. Educators will be nominated by their LEA and selected through a competitive process. Lessons will be reviewed by content experts at the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). The State will use \$1.65M of the remaining funds to support stipends to the selected educators and production, recording, and marketing costs at GPB. The State will submit an amendment for the remaining funds at a later date.

It is our 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 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 Georgia's Program Officer, Melissa Siry at Melissa.Siry@ed.gov or 202-260-0926.

Sincerely,

/s//

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

cc: Superintendent John Barge
Dr. Susan Andrews
Clara Keith
Kristin Bernhardt
Erin Hames