



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

May 24, 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.

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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 Department approves the amendments described below and in the attached table:

- In the project area of Standards and Assessment, Project 2: Professional Learning Units (PLUs) and training on Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS):
 - Shift \$700,000 in Year 2 contractual funds to Years 3 and 4 to support the development of CCGPS Professional Learning Units (PLUs). In its initial professional development, the State focused on introducing educators to the CCGPS in relation to the State's existing curriculum and creating resources for teachers to use in the classroom during the initial implementation year in SY 2012-2013. Now that teachers have had an opportunity to implement the CCGPS, they have identified specific professional development needs that will be addressed in the new PLU course. The Department acknowledges that the end date for developing the PLU course is shifted from April 2012 to June 2014. The PLU course will be available to teachers in June 2013, rather than June 2012.
 - Shift \$1,750,000 in Year 2 Contractual funds for the development of the Assessment Literacy PLU from Year 2 to Year 3. The Department acknowledges that GaDOE completed development of the Assessment Literacy PLU in December 2012, four months later than originally anticipated, resulting in the shift of funds. In addition, the State will not begin tracking participation in the course until January 2013, rather than June 2012, as originally planned.

- In the project area of Standards and Assessment, Project 3: Formative Assessment, shift the timeline for completion of the new formative assessment toolkit by one-year from September 2012 to September 2013 due to the State's decision to develop the formative assessment toolkit in two phases. The first phase was completed in November 2012 and focused on CCGPS content that students would have been introduced to as part of the State's previous curriculum. The second phase focuses on new CCGPS content. This shift does not have any budget implications.

The following amendment is approved with the condition outlined below:

- In the project area of Standards and Assessment, Project 4: Benchmark Assessments, shift the timeline for implementation of the benchmark assessment from June 2013 to September 2014. The benchmark assessments will be developed in two phases: the first set is being developed during SY 2012-2013, with implementation in January 2014 and the second set will be developed in SY 2013-2014, with implementation in September 2014. The State chose to delay the work because it did not want to duplicate efforts of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) consortium. The State asserts that it's work is not duplicative of the PARCC assessments because PARCC is developing diagnostic and mid-year formative assessments, not benchmark assessments.

Consistent with the Education Department General Administrative Regulations 34 CFR section 80.34 and Race to the Top Grant Condition N, the Department approves this request under the condition that the State make its benchmark assessments available for use by others, as requested.

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,

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

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

Grant Area	Project	Description of Change
All areas	All personnel expenditures	The fringe rate in Georgia increased from 46.643% to 48.841%. As a result, the State made minor revisions to all project budgets that include personnel expenditures.
B. Standards and Assessments	Goal 4b: Ensure fidelity of standards implementation by supporting LEAs in delivering appropriate professional learning to teachers.	GaDOE will continue to offer CCGPS training using State funds through June 2014, in addition to the introductory training it provided Years 1 and 2 of the grant. Originally, the State planned to conclude Activities 33 and 34 to provide blended professional development and travel funds to educators to support implementation of the CCGPS in August 2012.
B. Standards and Assessments	Project 1: Preparation for CCGPS Rollout	Shift \$1,302,912 in Year 2 Contractual funds to Years 3 and 4. In its initial professional development, the State focused on introducing educators to the CCGPS in relation to the State's existing curriculum and creating resources for teachers to use in the classroom during the initial implementation year in SY 2012-2013. As a result, the State did not expend approximately \$600,000 in Contractual funds that were originally intended for this purpose in Year 2. The remaining funds were obligated in Year 2, but will be expended in Year 3.
B. Standards and Assessments	Project 2: Develop Professional Learning Units (PLUs) for CCGPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift \$720,048 in unexpended Year 2 Travel funds Contractual to extend the Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESA) English Language Arts (ELA) contracts to Year 4. To ensure quality implementation, the State will continue to utilize ELA specialists at the 16 RESAs to provide training and assistance to LEAs throughout the year. The State will extend the corresponding timelines in accordance with this change. • Shift \$2,172,000 in Year 2 Training Stipends to Years 3 and 4. The State did not need to offer training stipends in Year 2 due to the format of the CCGPS professional learning. The State will utilize these funds in Years 3 and 4 for additional CCGPS training. • Shift \$1,750,000 in year 2 Contractual funds for the development of the Assessment Literacy PLU from Year 2 to Year 3. The Department

Grant Area	Project	Description of Change
		acknowledges that GaDOE was delayed in the development of the Assessment Literacy PLU, resulting in the shift of funds.
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction	Projects 6, 7, and 8: P-20 Data Warehouse	Shift unexpended Year 2 funds into Years 3 and 4 and shift some agency liaison position funds from personnel and fringe to contractual to extend its contract with the vendor that is providing direct assistance to agencies in implementing the P-20 longitudinal data system (LDS). In its original plan, Georgia planned to hire agency liaison positions to provide personnel support to other State agencies that are participating in the development of the P-20 LDS. However, the State believes it is more efficient to continue the contract with the vendor that has already been working with the involved agencies.
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction	Project 11: University System of Georgia Projects	Roll \$503,671 in unexpended Year 2 funds into Year 3 in the same cost categories. The State reports that there is no delay in project activities. Additionally, there is no net change in total funding for Project 11.
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction	Project 12: Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) Projects	The State will shift \$656,364 from Year 2 to Year 4 due to delays in becoming an approved alternative certification provider. As a result, TCSG was unable to update its technology infrastructure to support the new alternative certification program TCSG will extend the timeline for completion of the technology work into Year 4. The end date shifted from September 2013, to June 2014.
D. Great Teachers and Leaders	Project 20: UTeach	Shift the \$891,602 in unexpended Year 2 Contract funds to Year 3. These funds have already been obligated under the UTeach contract, but will be expended in Year 3.
D. Great Teachers and Leaders	Project 21: CEISMC	Create 16 additional STEM Fast Forward videos with Georgia Public Broadcasting. The first 16 videos have received positive responses from teachers. The State will use \$441,330 in unexpended funds across its projects to support development of the videos.

Grant Area	Project	Description of Change
A. State Success Factors	Project 28: Innovation Fund	Shift \$5,779,178 in unexpended Year 2 Contract funds into Year 3. These are funds that have already been obligated to recipients under the Innovation Fund, but will be expended in Year 3.
A. State Success Factors	Project 29: Project Management	Use \$507,734 in Personnel and Fringe savings from actual expenditures in Year 2 and projected savings in Year 4 to Year 3 Personnel and Fringe, Travel, Equipment, Contractual, and Other based on revised cost assumptions.
A. State Success Factors	Project 31: Base Funding to Participating LEAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift approximately \$12.5 million in unspent funds from Year 2 to Year 3. The purpose and overall amount of funding to LEAs remains the same. LEAs will use the funds in the remaining years of the grant. • Consolidate all funds for participating LEAs in Project 31, including the base allocations for participating LEAs and additional funds from the State portion of the Race to the Top grant.