



United States Department of Education
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

September 14, 2011

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 plan. On August 16, 2011, the State submitted documentation related to this request to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) and, in the subsequent weeks, clarified various elements of the request. As you are aware, the Department has the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided that such amendments do not alter the scope or objectives of the approved application. On January 6, 2011, the Department sent a letter and "Grant Amendment Submission Process" document to Governors of grantee States indicating the process by which the Department would review and approve or deny amendments. To determine whether the Department would approve your amendments, we applied the conditions noted in this document, and compared it with the Race to the Top program *Principles*, which this document also includes.

I am approving the following amendments to Georgia's approved Race to the Top budget, specifically to *Project 2. Professional Learning Units and Training on the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS)* and *Project 25. The New Teacher Project (TNTP)*, respectively.

In Georgia's approved application, it allocated \$400,000 in *Project 25. TNTP* to pay for stipends for participants in TNTP's summer institute. (TNTP candidates participate in a summer institute prior to being placed in classrooms). The State set a goal of placing at least 116 TNTP candidates in schools for the 2011-2012 school year. Because the State anticipated exceeding this goal, it allocated funds for summer stipends to accommodate more than 116 TNTP candidates. However, the state reported that there are fewer teaching slots for the 2011-2012 school year

www.ed.gov

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

than the State originally projected. The State only placed 107 TNTP candidates in schools for the 2011–2012 school year. In addition, through the Race to the Top budget, the State intended to pay each participant a stipend sufficient to ensure that the candidates would be provided \$2,000 after taxes had been deducted. The State ultimately allocated \$2,000 pre taxes and thus did not spend the total amount budgeted to this project. Specifically, the State has a total of \$186,000 in unallocated training stipends in Year 1 of the budget for TNTP.

The State requests to reallocate these funds for *Project 2. Professional Learning Units and Training on the CCGPS*. Specifically, in its approved plan and budget, the State allocated funds for 16 half-time Professional Learning Specialists to provide training on the CCGPS to teachers through each of the State's 16 Regional Educational Service Centers (RESAs). However, because the Metro RESA serves six of the largest counties in the State (approximately 700 schools and 42,000 teachers), Georgia requests to provide \$160,000 in additional funds in Year 2 to enable the Metro RESA to hire two additional full-time employees (FTEs). These FTEs will help ensure that Metro RESA has the capacity to provide adequate training on the CCGPS to the teaching staff in the counties that it serves. The State requests to reallocate the remaining \$25,952 to the contract with Georgia Public Broadcasting to increase the technology support that will particularly benefit participating local educational agencies LEA in rural areas.

Finally, within *Project 2. Professional Learning Units and Training on the CCGPS*, the State originally allocated funds in the personnel category for the 16 aforementioned half-time Professional Learning Specialists when it should have done so in the contractual line. These employees are paid as part of the contracts that the State is entering into with the RESA's rather than by the State educational agency. So, the State will shift \$1,120,000 funds from personnel to contractual in *Project 2. Professional Learning Units and Training on the CCGPS*, in addition to shifting the unused \$186,000 from *Project 25. TNTP* to contractual in *Project 2. Professional Learning Units and Training on the CCGPS*.

In addition to approving the above changes, the Department accepts Georgia's update to its optional performance measures in reform area *C. Data Systems to Support Instruction*. Georgia will indicate in its scope of work that it has established 25 percent as the target for optional performance measures two through six, respectively, for school year 2012-2013 (the first year for which data will be available).

It is our understanding that the amendments will not result in a change in your State's required performance measures or outcomes, nor will they substantially change the scope of work. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of the amendment.

I am confident that Georgia will continue its bold, comprehensive reform efforts. If you need assistance or have questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact

Georgia's Race to the Top Program Officer, Victoria Hammer, at 202-260-1438 or Victoria.Hammer@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: John D. Barge
Teresa MacCartney
Erin Hames