



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

January 9, 2012

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 November 9 and December 20, 2011 the State submitted amendment requests to the U.S. Department of Education (the Department). As you are aware, the Department has the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided that such changes do 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 amendments outlined below and in the attached table:

- For the project area of Great Teacher and Leaders, in project 13 related to establishing a clear approach for measuring student growth: (1) Reduce contractual funds by \$1.5 million because the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) will build the technology infrastructure necessary for the growth model to be implemented and maintained. GaDOE will contract with a non-profit organization to provide the technical expertise to customize the growth model to meet Georgia's specifications. The contract will ensure that the growth model is built and implemented accurately, provide training and technical assistance to GaDOE staff to build the in-house capacity and expertise to support ongoing usage of the growth model, and develop reporting tools for usage of data and outputs from the model. The contractor will also review the model after the second year of usage to further develop and enhance the model, reports, and associated resources. The contractual savings will support activities in projects 1, 13, and 16. (2) Hire a District Improvement Specialist and an Assessment Specialist using \$633,000 of the contractual savings. The District Improvement Specialist will work directly with participating LEAs to facilitate data analysis, leadership development, organization and planning, and professional learning at the district level that will support efforts being

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made at the school-level. The intention is to use the District Improvement Specialist to help increase capacity for this work at the district level. The Assessment Specialist will work with the Value-added Model/Growth Program Manager to implement the student growth model for the 26 participating LEAs. This position will also work on the teacher of record, professional business rules, implementation guidelines, training plans, and reporting procedures.

- For the project area of Great Teacher and Leaders, in project 14 related to establishing a clear approach for measuring student growth by developing other quantitative measures of student learning, shift \$1.5 million in contractual funds for the development of student surveys for use in the teacher evaluation system to the personnel category. The State was able to develop the student surveys at a lower cost and will be administering the surveys in-house, resulting in available funding to support these additional positions.
 - These funds will be used to staff four positions to support districts with the development and implementation of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs). The State will also hire an Induction Specialist to better support districts as they assess their current practices around teacher and leader induction and then implement induction programs aligned to the guidelines established by the Induction Task Force.

The following amendment is approved based on the State's compliance with the condition identified below:

- For the project area of Great Teacher and Leaders, delay the pilot of the "reduction of the student achievement gap" component in the teacher evaluation system. The Educator Effectiveness Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) reviewed the student achievement gap data by subgroup at the classroom level and was concerned about the reliability of subgroup status scores. Georgia will continue to explore other methods of calculating the reduction of the student achievement gap at the classroom level during the pilot in 2011-12 to explore how it may be included in the teacher evaluation system for school year 2012-13. This component comprised 10% of the Teacher Effectiveness Measure score. The component will remain in the Leader Evaluation System.

The Department approves this request under the condition that the State submits a report in June 2012 summarizing the steps taken to investigate other methods to incorporate the reduction of the student achievement gap at the classroom level, the results of that analysis, and proposal for the implementation of the component in the 2012-13 school year.

It is our understanding that the amendments will not result in a change in your State's performance measures and outcomes, nor will they substantially change the scope of the project. Please note that the Department is currently reviewing additional amendments from Georgia. The amendments in this letter may be subject to additional conditions pending the approval of the remaining requests. This letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of the amendments.

Additionally, Georgia clarified targets for its performance measures in section (D)(5). The State reported newly-collected baseline data, established performance targets and corrected inaccuracies in previously-reported baselines and targets accordingly. The State will remove the

optional targets related to average length of induction programs for teachers and principals because those districts with induction programs were already meeting the originally proposed target of two years. In addition, the baseline data for the two optional performance measures related to the Summer Leadership Academies were incorrect. The State has updated the baseline data and adjust the targets accordingly. The State maintains the same overall target for both measures. The attached chart provides clarifications (in bold italics) for all measures in (D)(5).

The State also provided accurate information for its course completion targets. The State reported that the baseline data provided in the original application was based on the State's definition of college persistence and that this definition does not align with the required performance measure. The State will adjust the baseline data and targets as shown in the attached table. The State maintained the .5 percent increase that it had established in its approved application.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact your Race to the Top Program Officer, Melissa Siry, at 202-260-0926 or Melissa.Siry@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

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

cc: Superintendent John Barge
Teresa MacCartney
Erin Hames

Attachments

Attachment 1: Amendment Table

Assurance Area	Project	Description of change
All areas	All projects	The fringe rate increased from 39.365% in year 1 to 46.643% in years 2-4. The State will use unexpended year 1 funds to support the additional fringe expenses in years 2-4.
A. State Success Factors	Project 31: Base funding for participating LEAs	Shift approximately \$1 million in unspent funds from year 1 to year 2. The purpose and overall amount of funding to LEAs remains the same. LEAs will use the funds in the remaining years of the grant.
B. Standards and Assessments	Project 1: Resources for CCGPS implementation	(1) Shift funding for the Georgia Public Broadcasting contract from year 1 to year 2 and use for the activities in (2) - (4) below. This shift in funding does not impact timelines outlined in the State Scope of Work. (2) Provide funding for additional instructional resources to support the CCGPS in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics in year 2. (3) Provide funds for 36 Integrated Team Writers to conduct three trainings of 20 teachers per session in the 27 Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESA). (4) Provide funding for ELA, Science, Social Studies, History and Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) teachers to develop instructional activities to supplement the new Literacy Integration standards for high school courses. Each team will develop a set number of activities to address reading and writing in those content areas. The total budget for Project 1 increases by \$492,100 and is supported with contractual savings in project 13 (described above.)
B. Standards and Assessments	Project 2: Develop Professional Learning Units (PLUs) for CCGPS	Shift \$750,000 from year 1 to year 2. This shift does not impact the timelines or deliverables in the approved Scope of Work.

Assurance Area	Project	Description of change
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction	Projects 6, 7, 8: P-20 Data Warehouse	<p>(1) Consolidate budgets for projects 6, 7, and 8 into a single budget in project 6 to simplify financial accounting and reporting and to better communicate that these projects are integrated, overlapping, and complementary components of the State's P-20 statewide longitudinal data system. (2) Shift approximately \$4 million in personnel, fringe, and equipment funds to the contractual category for a contract with the University System of Georgia to purchase, house, and maintain hardware, provide database administration services, and maintain backups. Georgia states that contracting with the University System of Georgia is a better long-term solution than hiring personnel in the Governor's Office of Student Achievement to conduct the work, as originally proposed. (3) Shift equipment and contractual funds to the supplies category to purchase and tailor an off-the-shelf product for data matching and metadata management systems. The State had initially planned on in-house development and building of the data matching and metadata management systems, but has determined that tailoring an off-the-shelf product is more efficient and requires less long-term maintenance and programming. The total project budget increases by \$19,335.</p>
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction	Project 10: Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) projects	<p>(1) Shift personnel, fringe, and equipment funds to the contractual category. GaPSC initially planned to hire two Data Architects but determined that it would be a more efficient and effective use of funds to shift the work to the contractual category, giving GaPSC more flexibility to acquire professional services as needed across subsequent years. (2) Repurpose funds initially intended to go directly to individual educator preparation programs to modify their specific data systems. The funds will now be used for the redevelopment of GaPSC's data systems, which will yield a greater benefit to the program providers and will ensure sustainability because GaPSC will maintain and enhance the system as necessary.</p>

Assurance Area	Project	Description of change
C. Data Systems to Support Instruction	Project 11: University System of Georgia projects	Shift \$1.2 million unspent personnel funds to the contractual category to be engaged as needed to assist with the development of ETL (extra, transform, and load) processes and to augment existing staff. These resources will provide specific point-in-time expertise, training and mentoring to the technical staff, complex report development expertise, database indexing, and partitioning and configuration support. Shifting the funds to contractual will expedite the remaining work.
D. Great Teachers and Leaders	Project 16: Evaluation training and process feedback	Hire three additional in-house staff to assist with training, for a total of 17 positions. These positions will be supported with unspent personnel resources in year 1 and savings identified in project 13 (described above). The total project budget increases by \$898,369.
D. Great Teachers and Leaders	Project 22: Summer Leadership Academies	Shift \$289,535 in unspent year 1 funds to support the additional resources being developed in project 1.

Attachment 2: Revised Performance Measures

Table 1: (D)(5) Performance Measures

		Actual Data: Baseline (SY 2009-2010)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
(D)(5)	Percent of all schools that have a minimum of 60 minutes per week of common planning time for teachers (either by grade level-elementary, or subject area-secondary)	(Unknown ¹) <i>74%</i>	<i>74%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>85%</i>	<i>100%</i>
(D)(5)	Percent of high-poverty, high-minority (or both) schools that have a minimum of 60 minutes per week of common planning time for teachers (either by grade level-elementary, or subject area-secondary)	(Unknown) <i>70%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>85%</i>	<i>100%</i>
(D)(5)	Percent of lowest-achieving schools that have a minimum of 60 minutes per week of common planning time for teachers (either by grade level-elementary, or subject area-secondary)	(Unknown) <i>70.0%</i>	<i>70%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>
(D)(5)	Percent of LEAs offering formal induction programs to new teachers	(Unknown) <i>77.0%</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>
(D)(5)	Percent of LEAs offering formal induction programs to new principals	(Unknown) <i>46.0%</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>
(D)(5)	Number of new teachers participating in induction programs. Percentage based on number of new teachers (7,260) in all 26 participating districts.	(Unknown) <i>5,102</i> <i>70%</i>	<i>73%</i>	<i>73%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>
(D)(5)	Number of new principals participating in induction programs. Percentage based on number of new principals (208) in all 26 participating districts.	(Unknown) <i>154</i> <i>74%</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>77%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>
(D)(5)	Percent of the 26 participating LEAs who send leadership teams to the Summer Leadership Academy every year*	(Unknown) <i>58%</i>	<i>73%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>75%</i>	<i>75%</i>

¹ Unknown refers to: SY 2009-2010 (Summer 2010); SY 2010-2011 (Summer 2011) ; SY 2011-2012 (Summer 2012) ; SY 2012-2013 (Summer 2013) ; SY 2013-2014 (Summer 2014)

		Actual Data: Baseline (SY 2009-2010)	End of SY 2010-2011	End of SY 2011-2012	End of SY 2012-2013	End of SY 2013-2014
(D)(5)	Participation in Summer Leadership Academy (total number of participants per year in summer leadership academy)	(150) 234	(200) 300	(300) 400	(400) 450	500
(D)(5)	Participation in Summer Leadership Academy (total number of schools participating per year in summer leadership academy)	(10) 23	(20) 25	30	40	50

Table 2: Course Completion Targets

Indicator	Baseline							
	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14
Increase the percentage of graduates who have completed a year's worth of college credits within two years of enrollment within a USG institution	(79.2%) 70.8%	(79.7%) 71.3%	(80.2%) 71.8%	(80.7%) 72.3%	(81.2%) 72.8%	(81.7%) 73.3%	(82.2%) 73.8%	(82.7%) 74.3%