



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

November 8, 2011

The Honorable Neil Abercrombie
Office of the Governor
State Capitol, Executive Chambers
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Governor Abercrombie:

I am writing in response to Hawaii's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. Between July 22, 2011 and October 18, 2011, 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.

The following amendments have been approved, as described below:

- For the project area of Standards and Assessments, for the Interim and Summative Assessments project, remove activities related to developing interim assessments. Rather than creating new interim assessments internally, Hawaii will use the assessments being developed by the Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium when they are available. As a result, Hawaii will reallocate the \$7 million previously budgeted for this project to the Assessment Literacy and End-of-Course Assessment projects, described below.
- For the project area of Standards and Assessments, for the Assessment Literacy project, reallocate \$2.34 million that was to be used to develop Interim Assessments to obtain formative assessment items aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). These items will be added to the Data for School Improvement formative assessment bank for tested and non-tested grades and subjects to provide teachers with a range of student achievement data to facilitate data-driven instructional decision-making. The State will use contracts and in-house personnel to develop the items. In addition, Hawaii will use an additional \$300,000 for travel expenses to provide additional teacher training on the use of formative assessment data.
- For the project area of Standards and Assessments, for the College and Career Ready (CCR) Diploma project, remove special designations from the CCR diploma in accordance with the Hawaii Board of Education's policy. The Hawaii Board of Education approved the CCR on October 4, 2011. The CCR diploma raises graduation expectations for students, beginning with the graduating class of 2016. The Hawaii Department of Education will establish a task force to create criteria and develop a plan to implement special recognitions for Academic Honors Pathway, Technical Honors Pathway, and STEM Honors Pathway through the Department of Education. The task force recommendations will be presented for approval in December 2011.

<http://www.ed.gov/>

- For the project area of Standards and Assessments, for the Common Core State Standards Implementation project, make the following changes to strategy, timeline and budget:
 - Use the Curriculum Framework for English/Language Arts and Math developed by the Hawaii Department of Education, rather than the Content Frameworks being developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to guide professional development and assist teachers as they rollout the CCSS in their classrooms. The Curriculum Frameworks will be available by the end of the 2011-12 school year.
 - Shift the end date for the adoption of common instructional materials by approximately one year due to delays in obtaining materials. The timeline for purchasing and training on the new materials remains the same.
 - For the task related to expanding the knowledge base and skill of State staff to develop and deliver professional development on the CCSS by attending national workshops, shift the start date to July 2011 from January 2011 to reflect when the activities actually began.
 - For the activity related to professional development plans for teachers on the CCSS, extend the end date to July 2014 from January 2011 to reflect the ongoing nature of this activity.
 - Delete activities related to creating criteria and contracting with a provider to evaluate open-source digital resources for assisting with the transition to CCSS. Instead, the State will take advantage of the digital resources being developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium to meet this objective.
 - Use an external vendor to create a blog, rather than an online hotline, to enable teachers to submit questions on the CCSS. The end date for this task will shift by seven months, from May 2011 to December 2011.
 - Using \$122,100 in cost savings from year 1 in this project, hire an administrative assistant to support the 32 resource teachers for three years.

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

- For the project area of Standards and Assessments, for the End-of-Course Assessment project, eliminate deliverables related to in-house item and test development and use \$4.51 million from the Interim and Summative Assessments project to purchase off-the-shelf end-of-course assessments in Algebra I, Algebra II, Expository Writing, U.S History, and Biology and to procure consultative expertise and support to assist in the development of the communication and training plans for the End-of-Course assessments. It is our understanding that these tests will not be used for summative purposes, and thus will not violate the program requirement prohibiting the use of Race to the Top funds on summative assessments (Notice Inviting Applications 75 FR 19498).

The Department approves this request with the requirement that the State submits to the Department by December 5, 2011 an assurance from the State Superintendent affirming that the End-of-Course tests will not be used for accountability purposes under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

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 Hawaii. 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.

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,

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

cc: Tammi Chun
Stephen Schatz