



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

February 7, 2012

The Honorable Neil Abercrombie
Office of the Governor
State Capital, 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 December 14, 2011, and January 7, 2012, the State submitted several amendment requests and supporting documentation 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 are approved:

- For the Community Access Portal project: 1) Reallocate \$1 million from the Hawaii Partnership for Educational Research Consortium (HPERC) project (described below) to fund a contract to develop a comprehensive strategic communications, interactive marketing, and branding plan, and to enhance a public reporting and community access portal. The total budget for this project is now \$1.67 million. 2) Shift the launch of the new website and Community Access portal from September 2012 to August 2013. The State determined that they needed more time to fully develop the new Community Access portal after assessing their current website. All activities associated with the launch of the Community Access port are shifted to align with the August 2013 launch.

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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.

- For the Improving Effectiveness of Educator Preparation Programs project, shift \$50,000 from year 1 to year 2, for a total of \$100,000 in year 2, to link student achievement data to teachers, principals, preparation programs of teachers and principals, teacher licensure status, and teacher professional development participation. The Department is currently reviewing an amendment to adjust the timeline for this project.
- For the Hawaii Partnership for Educational Research Consortium (HPERC) project, remove \$2.78 million initially slated for a professional services contract that would support the enhancement of the State's technical capacity to support a P-20 data warehouse. Through discussions with the State, the Department understands that the State is providing such support through other funding sources. The Department acknowledges that activities within this project are delayed by approximately 12 months. Projects delayed include creation of prioritization criteria for Hawaii Department of Education research questions, creation and implementation of a plan for reviewing and disseminating research results, training users on FERPA requirements within the research request database, and recruiting higher education partnership agencies and research organizations. In the future, when assessing the State's implementation, the Department will maintain transparency around the initial four-year plan, but will manage to the new timelines.

The following amendment is approved with the condition outlined below.

- For the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) project: 1) Because STEM activities are integrated throughout Hawaii's Race to the Top projects, revise timelines to align with the timelines in other approved amendments in related projects (see November 8 and December 21, 2011 amendment letters for previous approvals). These revised timelines do not include activities related to amendments that are not approved. 2) The State will launch a virtual STEM center, rather than operate two physical locations in the Zones of School Innovation (ZSI). The virtual STEM center will be incorporated into the Hawaii P-20/HIDOE College and Career Access portal and will include training for teachers and counselors, and access to college and career tools for students. According to the State, the virtual STEM center is a more sustainable option and will allow students, teachers, and parents statewide to access the tools and resources. The virtual STEM center will be complete in July 2013, instead of the original July 2011 target for the physical STEM centers. In addition, rather than promote an older STEM portal, the State will work to increase awareness of the virtual STEM center beginning in July 2013.

In accordance with the December 21, 2011 letter, approval of the development of virtual STEM centers is conditioned upon the State developing significant monthly milestones that establish a timeframe to ensure the State is able to fully implement the project within the grant period. In addition, the State must provide monthly updates in accordance with the identified milestones so that the Department can determine if the State is making adequate progress.

As a requirement of Hawaii's high-risk status, the State must submit an updated Scope of Work and budget that reflect the STEM milestones mentioned above, and all amendments approved in this letter by March 2, 2012.

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. As is our practice with all Race to the Top amendments, this letter will be posted on the Department's website.

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi
Tammi Chun
Stephen Schatz