



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

March 2, 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. As you are aware, the U.S. Department of Education (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 December 21, 2011, the Department placed Hawaii's Race to the Top grant on high-risk status because the State had not demonstrated adequate progress implementing its approved plans in the first year of the grant as evidenced by the Department's on-site program review in June 2011, monthly reports, and the amendments requested by the State between July and December, 2011. In that letter, the Department indicated its concern regarding the State's ability to fulfill its commitments within the grant period. As a condition of high-risk status, the State was placed on cost reimbursement basis. Additionally, the Department indicated that it would conduct an extensive on-site program review. At that time, Hawaii must provide clear and compelling evidence that demonstrates it has made substantial progress across its Race to the Top plan. After the review, the Department will reevaluate Hawaii's high-risk status. The on-site review will occur in March 2012. Please note that in addition to the principles mentioned above, the Department considers Hawaii's high-risk status when reviewing amendment.

The following amendments are approved:

- For the Evaluation Systems project, use \$2 million, originally allocated across years 1-4, in the 2012-2013 school year to provide additional assistance to schools participating in the second year of the teacher evaluation pilot, in accordance with the State's approved State scope of work. These activities are associated with the development of the teacher

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evaluation system, as discussed in the February 10, 2012, letter.

- In the Reorganization of Offices project, fund a Strategic Data Fellow within the Office of Strategic Reform to analyze data and answer key policy questions. The Strategic Data Fellowship is a two-year, full-time program that develops and places talented analytic leaders in school districts and State educational agencies where they can have an immediate impact on policy and management decisions that are likely to improve student outcomes. The State will use \$300,127 in cost savings from year 1 to fund the salary, fringe benefits, and contractual costs associated with hiring and supporting the fellow.

The following amendment is approved with the condition outlined below:

- For the Induction and Mentoring project: (1) Shift \$3 million in contractual funds from years 1 and 2 to years 3 and 4. The contract will establish a center for teacher induction to assist the Hawaii Department of Education with developing and implementing high-quality induction support for all beginning teachers. (2) Shift timelines for implementing Teacher Induction programs in all Complex Areas. The Teacher Induction Standards were adopted in August 2011, instead of November 2010 as originally planned. As a result of this delay, Complex Areas will fully implement the new Teacher Induction Standards by the end of the 2012-13 school year, rather than in the 2011-12 school year. Teachers will be trained on the Teacher Induction Standards during the 2011-12 school year, instead of the 2010-11 school year. (3) The State will provide \$175,000 to each Complex Area that submits an approvable plan for implementing the new Teacher Induction Standards rather than provide funding to Complex Areas that enter into a contract with a nationally recognized induction and mentoring organization. The State will support Complex Areas as they implement the new Teacher Induction Standards. This portion of the project will be supported with Title II funding.

In accordance with the December 21, 2011 and February 7, 2011 letters, approval of this amendment is conditioned upon the State providing quarterly updates on the status of implementation of the new Induction and Mentoring program so the Department can determine if the State is making adequate progress.

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