



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Patrick Quinn
Office of the Governor
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

May 6, 2015

Dear Governor Quinn:

I am writing in response to the Illinois's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. Between September 30, 2014 and March 27, 2015, the State submitted documentation and held conversations with the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to support amendment requests to its approved Race to the Top plan. ED has the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided the revisions do not change the overall scope and objectives of the approved proposal. In October 2011, ED issued the *Grant Amendment Submission Process* document, indicating the process by which amendments to accomplish the reform goals and deliverables it committed to in its Race to the Top application and approved Scope of Work would be reviewed. To determine whether approval could be granted, ED 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 following amendments, as described below.

- For section (A)(2) in the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Capacity project, adjust the approach and budget to implement the ISBE Capacity project. The State reported that through developing and maintaining a new personnel structure in ISBE's Center for Performance (CfP), the State will be better positioned to manage and implement the remainder of Illinois' Race to the Top grant and, ultimately, incorporate the new CfP infrastructure into ISBE beyond the period grant. The new CfP personnel structure will include: 1) CfP Division Supervisor [who will replace the Director of Policy and Program Implementation, the Director of Performance Management, and the Director of Strategic Analytics positions]; 2) two principal consultants; 3) a University of Chicago Public Interest Program Fellow; and 4) a part-time administrative assistant. The CfP division supervisor manages CfP staff activities regarding all Race to the Top grant management. As such, ISBE will shift \$604,374 from Year 1 (\$206,685) and Year 2 (\$397,689) to Year 3 (\$108,097) and Year 4 (\$139,976).
- For section (D)(2) in the Performance Advisory Council (PEAC) Supports project, adjust the activities and budget of the PEAC Supports project to extend into Years 3 and 4. ISBE reports that PEAC has been successful in generating guidance for the implementation of Illinois' teacher and leader evaluation systems. However, the State believes that more support and guidance is needed for LEAs to fully implement their

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202
<http://www.ed.gov/>

local teacher and leader evaluation systems. Specifically, ISBE plans to direct the PEAC council to develop and disseminate further guidance in the areas of evaluator recalibration and renewal training, developing supporting resources for implementing evaluation systems, developing guidance for fine arts, and making necessary revisions to existing guidance documents as needed. As such, ISBE will shift a total of \$244,751 to Years 3 (\$113,925) and 4 (\$130,826). The funds come from remaining amounts in Years 1 (\$6,331) and 2 (\$4,400) and \$234,020 from a previously approved budget amendment.

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

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please David Yi at (202) 453-5674 or OSS.Illinois@ed.gov. Thank you for your continued commitment to enhancing education for all of the Illinois's students.

Sincerely,

/s/

Monique M. Chism, Ph.D.
Director
Office of State Support

cc: Tony Smith
Peter Godard
Julie Evans