



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

November 24, 2015

The Honorable Bobby Jindal
Office of the Governor
PO Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9004

Dear Governor Jindal:

I am writing in response to Louisiana's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project, including revisions to the project period to implement a portion of its plan. On September 10, 2015, the State submitted documentation to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to support an amendment request 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 June 2014, ED issued *Amendment Requests with No-cost Extension Guidance and Principles*, indicating the process by which amendments containing requests to provide additional time for a grantee 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, including timeline extensions, as described below.

Louisiana has budgeted \$933,260.34 for three projects in the no-cost extension period (January-December 2016):

- Louisiana will transfer of \$338,087.66 in unused funds from five State projects that have been completed and will not be continued in Year 5 into two of the three projects the Louisiana proposes to extend into Year 5:
- Louisiana will transfer \$312,055.60 previously budgeted for the third continuing project into the other two continuing projects: Louisiana has determined that the original budget for the third project (Believe and Prepare) was higher than necessary as Louisiana has been able to finance the project using considerable fewer funds for participant travel and lodging than it originally anticipated:
- Louisiana will carry over \$283,117.08 of Year 4 funds allocated to the three continuing projects.

As described below, the work LDOE proposes to continue in Year 5 extends projects already underway in Louisiana's Race to the Top grant.

In Project(2) (B.3): *Implementing Enhanced STEM Standards: State Standards (Instructional Support)*, Louisiana has budgeted a total of \$309,000 in unexpended grant funds in Year 5 to continue the implementation and delivery of instructional resources and professional development modules in

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English language arts, mathematics and science to support effective instructional practices. The no-cost extension will allow the State content team to continue the development of professional development and instructional resources to enhance teachers' ability to work with challenging State standards and assessments training and development.

In Project (2B)(B.3): *Implementing Enhanced STEM Standards: Advanced Placement Initiative*, Louisiana will budget a total of \$484,537.75 in unexpended grant funds in Year 5 to support its efforts to offer increased opportunities for student to take Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Louisiana will continue its expansion of AP course offerings to students; Louisiana has seen a 14 percent increase in AP course offerings with the number of available courses being increased to 136 courses overall. In addition to offering training to teacher new to AP, Louisiana will continue to offer training for experienced AP teachers to attend AP institutes and refresher courses. Louisiana will also offer teachers who have already attended AP institutes the opportunity to participate in follow up webinars on building and sustaining AP. The State will continue its effort to monitor and provide opportunities for feedback on the program as implementation continues.

In Project 5 (D.3): *Louisiana's Statewide Staffing Initiative for Believe and Prepare*, Louisiana will reduce the amount originally budgeted to this project by \$312,055.60, and budget \$139,722.59 in Year 5 to continue the Believe and Prepare project. In Year 5, Louisiana will use carryover funding to continue this mentoring and training program, which empowers schools and districts to design innovative classroom- and school-based preparation experiences for aspiring educators. Additionally, the program will continue to offer mentoring for new teachers and help provide training to mentors.

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 we expect grantees with no-cost extensions to liquidate all funds by September 30, 2017, given that by law all Race to the Top funds revert to the U.S. Department of Treasury as of October 1, 2017. 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 contact Elizabeth Witt at: OSS.Louisiana@ed.gov. Thank you for your continued commitment to enhancing education for all of Louisiana's students.

Sincerely,

/s/

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

cc: John White, State Superintendent of Schools
Sheila Guidry, Louisiana Department Of Education Race to the Top Lead