September 26, 2013

The Honorable Martin O'Malley
Office of the Governor
Maryland State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor O'Malley:

I am writing in response to Maryland's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. Between July 30 and September 18, 2013, 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.

I approve the following amendments:

- For the project area Data Systems to Support Instruction, in the project "Develop the Overall Technology Infrastructure" (8/11): 1) purchase less hardware than originally anticipated in the State's approved application. Instead, the State will purchase additional software that will allow it to maximize the hardware by creating virtual servers. The State reports that this cloud-based hosting solution maximizes both time and financial resources. As a result, the State will reduce the Year 3 and 4 equipment budget by $231,720; and 2) change the strategy for implementation of a user management system for the kindergarten-12th grade longitudinal data system (LDS). MSDE originally planned to build and/or buy a centralized user management system. However, after working with LEAs, the State determined that it makes more sense to leverage and use existing user management systems. The approach will ensure more accurate user

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authentication, as the LEAs maintain more current and more accurate information about employment status, status of parents and guardians, and other issues required for user authentication. The State will roll out the kindergarten-12th grade LDS through the decentralized security system from September 2013 to June 2014.

- For the project area Data Systems to Support Instruction, in the project "Accessing and Using State Data Dashboards" (9/27): 1) replace six dashboards originally slated for development in Years 2 and 3 with six new dashboards that will better support Maryland's goals related to preparing students to be college- and career-ready; and 2) shift $259,438 in unexpended Year 3 funds to Year 4 contractual to complete the project in accordance with the timeline described below.

- For the project area Data Systems to Support Instruction, in the project "Implement a Statewide System to Support System Instructional Intervention" (21/42), offer sub-grants to participating LEAs to enhance existing systems and processes that support student instructional intervention, instead of developing a statewide instructional intervention system. After reviewing solutions for a State system as described in its approved Race to the Top application, the State determined that it was not cost effective. LEAs will use the funds to: 1) help subsidize local procurements for new intervention systems, 2) subsidize the expansion or enhancement of existing intervention systems, or 3) subsidize custom development to support more robust system integration between LEA data systems. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) will monitor LEAs use of project funds through site visits beginning in November 2013. The State will shift $1,196,492 in Year 2 equipment funds to Year 4 supplemental funding for participating LEAs.

- For the project area Data Systems to Support Instruction, in the project "Develop a Framework and Content for Online Teach Toolkit Portal" (23/55), add Year 4 activities to update its existing Classroom Focused Instructional Improvement Process (CFIP), a data analysis and data dialogue professional development process used at the school-level.

- For the project area of Great Teachers and Leaders, in the project Teacher Induction Academies (39/25), add additional activities in Year 4, including site visits to participating LEAs and purchasing additional induction support materials. The additional activities will focus on sustainability and ensure LEA capacity to implement induction programs after Race to the Top. The State will shift $313,946 from Year 3 cost savings to support the work in Year 4.

It is our understanding that these amendments will not result in a change in your State's performance measures and outcomes, not will they substantially change the Scope of Work.

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In addition, the Department acknowledges the timeline delays descried below:

- For the project area Data Systems to Support Instruction, in the project "Develop the Overall Technology Infrastructure" (8/11), MSDE prioritized the development of the P-20 LDS over the K12 LDS, resulting in a timeline delay of the K12 LDS of approximately 15 months. This delay centers on the completion of the security enterprise system, describe above, and has implications on "Accessing and Using State Data Dashboards" (project 9/27) and "Multi-media Training" (project 10/28). The system was originally slated for completion in May 2013, and will now be complete in September 2013.

- For the project area Data Systems to Support Instruction, in the project "Accessing and Using State Data Dashboards" (9/27), the State is significantly delayed in the completion of user acceptance testing, production, and roll out of all 36 dashboards. In its original Scope of Work, the State planned to complete testing and development, and roll out 12 dashboards per year in Years 1-3 as they completed development. However, as described above in the "Develop the Overall Technology Infrastructure" (8/11) project, the State is unable to roll out dashboards until the user management system is complete. As a result, all dashboards will be rolled out to stakeholders in Year 4.

Please note that 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 me.

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: Dr. Lillian Lowery, State Superintendent of Schools
       Penelope Thornton-Talley, Esq.
       Mary Gable