



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

May 1, 2014

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, including revisions to the project period to implement a portion of its plan. Between December 27, 2013 and April 29, 2014 the State submitted amendment requests and no cost extension 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. In March 2013, the Department 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 and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Department has applied the conditions and elements specific to no-cost extensions noted in the document, and compared it with the Race to the Top program *Principles* included in the "Grant Amendment Submission Process" document issued to Governors of grantee States in October 2011.

I approve the following amendments, including extensions to the time period for implementation of several projects, as described below.

- In the "Develop Online Instructional Intervention Modules" project (22/6), shift \$865,338 of unexpended Year 3 funds to Years 4 and 5 to continue and extend the completion of enrichment and instructional intervention modules for teachers and students as part of Maryland's online instructional improvement system. In the State's original plans, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) was slated to complete 375 modules for students and educators across Years 3 and 4, including: 1) 250 English Language Arts and mathematics modules, and 2) 125 disciplinary literacy modules (e.g., science and social studies). Due to delays in procurement and finalizing its vendor contract, MSDE reports it began this work

later than anticipated in Year 3. The State completed 12 modules during Year 3 and now plans to complete the remaining 363 modules during Years 4 and 5.

I conditionally approve the following amendment:

- In the “Educator Instructional Improvement Academies” project (41/24), shift \$830,586 of unexpended Year 3 funds from other projects to Years 4 and 5 to support the Governor’s Principal Pipeline initiative.¹ MSDE’s Scope of Work and budget included funds in Years 1-3 for annual, in-person professional development for educators on the State’s reform initiatives. Based on feedback from superintendents and needs identified by the State, the Principal Pipeline will implement a year-long leadership development program for promising principals, with the goal of increasing local educational agency (LEA) capacity to implement and sustain Maryland’s reform agenda. The Pipeline will include a summer Governor’s Principals’ Academy and three topical convenings, which current principals may also attend, during the year that will focus on content and needs identified by LEA superintendents.

This approval is conditioned on the State completing and providing to the Department the following:

- 1) By May 30, 2014, a scope and sequence that outlines the State’s objectives and desired outcomes of the summer 2014 Governor’s Academy and subsequent topical convenings for the Principal Pipeline;
- 2) By September 30, 2014, documentation and analysis of participant feedback from the summer 2014 Governor’s Principals’ Academy; and
- 3) By December 1, 2014, an assessment, with evidence, of the State’s progress to date and how MSDE plans to use this information to inform its implementation moving forward.

As described in an April 9, 2014 amendment approval letter, the Department indicated that it generally approves the State’s process to review LEA subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after September 23, 2014. Prior to June 30, 2014, the Department expects the State to submit a record of each participating LEA project approved by the State for a no-cost extension and the total funding approved for the LEAs’ Year 5 Scopes of Work.

It is our understanding that these amendments and no-cost extensions 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 are

¹ During MSDE’s Year 3 budget carryover review, the State identified funds not spent during Years 1 through 3. The State allocated these unspent funds to Year 4 as appropriate and then made determinations about the best use of these funds, which in some cases were shifts to other project budgets as described above.

expecting grantees with no-cost extensions to liquidate all funds by September 1, 2015, given that by law all Race to the Top funds revert to the U.S. Department of Treasury as of October 1, 2015. The State must request and receive approval to move forward with no-cost extensions for any additional projects. 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 Maryland's Race to the Top Program Officer, Julie Glasier, at (202) 205-0940 or Julie.Glasier@ed.gov.

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