



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

June 17, 2011

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. From April 28 - June 14, 2011 the State submitted amendment requests to the U.S. Department of Education (the Department). As you are aware, the Department has the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided that such changes do not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On January 6, 2011, the Department sent a letter and "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 am pleased to approve the following amendments:

- In the Great Teachers and Leaders section of the application (section (D)), adjust the approach to give all local educational agencies (LEAs) the opportunity to pilot their new teacher and principal evaluation systems in school year (SY) 2012-13, rather than requiring full implementation in that year as originally planned. According to Maryland's proposal, although information from the new teacher and principal evaluations systems will not be used to inform decisions regarding compensation, promotion, retention, grant of tenure, or dismissal, all participating LEAs will implement all required components of these new evaluation systems in SY2011-12. As a result of this change in approach, the following performance measures and activities are impacted:

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

- SY2011-12: performance measures related to using this data to inform decisions regarding compensation, promotion, retention, grant of tenure, or dismissal should be zero in SY2011-12. However, pilot data will still be used to inform decisions regarding professional development; therefore, performance measure (D)(2)(iv)(a) does not change.

Maryland has noted that an additional pilot year of the state-wide system is necessary and beneficial for the following reasons:

- *The Maryland State Board of Education ("Board") is required under the Education Reform Act of 2010 to promulgate final regulations to implement the statewide system. In June 2010, the Governor issued an executive order establishing the Council for Educator Effectiveness ("Council") to provide recommendations for the development of a model evaluation system. These recommendations will be available by June 30, 2011. The Council was originally charged with providing these recommendations by December 31, 2010, but requested additional time to gain stakeholder input and the Governor extended the deadline until June 30, 2011. (See amendment approval letter dated April 8, 2011.)*
- *The State Teacher Evaluation System model will not be completed until spring 2012. Under the proposed system, 50 percent of the evaluation measures student growth. Of this 50 percent, LEAs have flexibility in determining up to 20 percent of their teacher and principal evaluation systems; 30 percent of the evaluation is mandated by the State. Of the remaining 50 percent, LEAs have flexibility in determining the frequency (at least once annually), format, and means to assess teacher skills, knowledge, and practice in at least four specific domains specified in the State's plan. If LEAs opt not to develop their own measures or do not propose measures that meet the State's guidelines, they will be required to adopt the State model for this portion. The development of the State model is dependent on the Council's recommendations and the issuance of State regulations.*
- *LEAs need additional time to determine elements of their plans and work closely with their bargaining units. LEA plans could not be finalized until the Board issues final regulations. Successful implementation will require that that LEA plans are developed thoughtfully and reflect the input of local stakeholders.*
- *The proposed pilot year will give all LEAs time to identify and make ongoing improvements to their evaluation systems before they are required under State law to use these data to inform decisions regarding compensation, promotion, retention, grant of tenure, or dismissal in SY2013-14.*
- *State and LEAs have stressed the need for additional time to provide appropriate professional development for teachers and principals. Findings from the 7-LEA pilot would be used to inform the development of the statewide default system and the local LEA measures. Professional development would be offered to all LEAs beginning at the end of SY2011-12.*
- In the project titled "Educator Effectiveness Academies" (Project number 41 /24), during the summer of 2011, adjust the approach to provide targeted professional development over the course of three days in two content areas, rather than five days of training in four content areas, as was originally proposed. The State will focus summer 2011 Effectiveness Academies on two topics: the Common Core State Curriculum; and

formative, interim, and summative assessments. In its planning stage, the State determined that professional development in these two critical areas was its highest priority, and should be the focus of the summer 2011 Academies. Subsequent training in summer 2012 and 2013 will provide professional development in all four areas of reform, including the Instructional Improvement System (IIS) and the Online Instructional Toolkit, as originally planned. During SY 2011-12 and SY 2012-13, school teams will continue to participate in two days of professional development training, as originally proposed. Adjustments to the budget result in a change from approximately \$13.9 million to \$12.7 million. Maryland has submitted an additional amendment which describes its use of the remaining approximately \$1.2 million; this amendment is currently under review by the Department.

- In the project titled “Teacher Induction Academies” (Project number 39/25), adjust the approach to provide targeted professional development for induction program coordinators and new teacher mentors. The State determined that the content, goals and objectives of the program could be accomplished in fewer sessions and that the content should be more focused during the first summer. As a result:
 - During the summer of 2011, provide professional development in two content areas, rather than four as was originally proposed. Subsequent training in summers 2012 and 2013 will provide professional development in all four areas of reform, including the Instructional Improvement System (IIS) and the Online Instructional Toolkit, as originally planned.
 - During summers 2011, 2012 and 2013, school teams will participate in three days of training, rather than five days as was originally proposed. In addition, participants will receive two follow-up sessions during the school year, rather than three as was originally proposed.
 - The State will train 300 new mentors through these Induction Academies, and continue to meet its goal of providing training to at least one mentor for every 15 new teachers in Maryland. (Maryland anticipates 4500 new teachers this year, rather than 7500, as originally estimated in its application.)
 - The project budget will be reduced from \$1.9 million to \$1.7 million. Maryland has submitted an additional amendment which describes its use of the remaining approximately 200,000; this amendment is currently under review by the Department.

- In the project titled: “Compensation for teachers and principals in the lowest-achieving 5% of schools” (Project number 33/50), adjust the approach and start date to provide incentives to highly effective teachers and principals to work in Tier I and Tier II schools beginning in SY2011-12, rather than Tier I, Tier II and Tier III schools beginning in SY2010-11, as originally proposed. Maryland believes that by limiting eligibility to Tier I and Tier II schools, the State can ensure that incentives are targeted to schools with the greatest need. By eliminating mid-year incentives in the first year, the State can provide more generous incentives when employment offers are being made at the beginning of a school year. As a result:
 - Incentives in SY2011-12 and SY2012-13 would be based on Tier I and Tier II schools’ current evaluation systems.
 - Incentives would be based on ratings under the new evaluation system in SY2013-14, upon full implementation of the new evaluation system. (See amendment request above for additional details regarding the statewide pilot in SY2012-13.)

- The total project budget of \$3,216,000 will be evenly split between three years SY2011-12, SY2012-13, and SY13-14, as opposed to four years.
- In the project titled: “Compensation for Teachers in Shortage Areas” (Project number 34/51), adjust the approach and start date. Provide incentives to highly effective teachers and principals to work in five LEAs (Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Dorchester County, Kent County, and Prince George’s County), where the largest concentration of 53 Tier III schools are located, beginning in SY2011-12 rather than Tier I, Tier II and Tier III schools beginning in SY2010-11, as originally proposed. Maryland believes that by limiting eligibility to five LEAs, the State can target the incentives to LEAs with the largest concentration of Tier III schools, and schools with the greatest need. By eliminating mid-year incentives in the first year, the State can provide more generous incentives when employment offers are being made. As a result:
 - Incentives in SY2011-12 and SY2012-13 would be based on schools’ current evaluation systems.
 - Incentives would be based on ratings under the new evaluation system in SY2013-14, upon full implementation of the new evaluation system. (See amendment request above for additional details regarding the statewide pilot in SY2012-13.)

In addition, I am pleased to approve the amendments described in the attached chart, which relate primarily to timeline and budget shifts, or other clarifications.

It is our understanding that the amendments will not substantially change the scope of work. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department’s website as a record of the amendments. I am confident that Maryland will continue its bold, comprehensive reform efforts. If you have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact your Race to the Top Program Officer, Melissa Siry, at 202-260-0926 or melissa.siry@ed.gov and Rina Dhalla, at 202-453-5546 or rina.dhalla@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

//s//

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

Cc: Nancy Grasmick
James V. Foran

Grant project area affected	Specific project	Description of change
Clarification of LEA scopes of work approval process in years 2-4.	N/A	Clarify the State's process for integrating LEA scopes of work into the master planning process for years 2 - 4. On November 22, 2010, the State received from all participating LEAs a four-year plan and a four-year budget for Race to the Top. The State approved all LEA plans for the first year, and elected to provide one year of the section 14006(c) subgrant to participating LEAs. In its approved scope of work, Maryland indicated its intent to integrate the scope of work approval process into the State's master planning process for years 2 - 4. According to this process, all 24 LEAs will submit Master Plans annually to the State on October 15 th . The State Superintendent of Schools approves or rejects the Plans and advises the State Board at the December board meeting. This process allows the State to facilitate an efficient and effective transfer of planning and budget information from LEAs.
A: State Success Factors	Office of Academic Reform and Innovation (#1/78) and Program Evaluation (#2/1)	Provide additional funding to better support the Office of Academic Reform. Maryland originally budgeted for two personnel, a program director and a finance manager. Maryland has determined that it will require additional personnel, a communications specialist and technical program director, in order to successfully implement the grant. Since the University System of Maryland, which has been contracted to conduct the program evaluation, has determined that it can satisfactorily complete the program evaluation for \$4,750,000, Maryland has reduced the budget for the program evaluation by \$250,000 and reallocated these funds to the Office of Academic Reform to support the additional personnel.
B: Standards and Assessments	Curriculum and Formative Assessment Development (#4/3)	Reduce personnel and fringe benefit allocation in SY2010-11 due to delay in hiring project personnel. Shift \$262,710 to contractual budget for additional contractual project management services to support the technical project manager over the remainder of the grant.
C: Data Systems to Support Instruction	16/20 STEM Instructional and Career Support (#16/20)	Shift activity of placing STEM industry practitioners/volunteers in the classroom from Spring 2011 to the beginning of SY2011-12 due to the late start of the project. In addition, shift contractual budget to "other" line item to reflect grant award to Maryland Business Roundtable, a non-governmental organization.

Grant project area affected	Specific project	Description of change
D: Great Teachers and Leaders	Professional Development for Executive Officers (#40/15)	Clarify the scope of professional development activities provided in SY2011-12 and SY2012-13. Specifically, (1) During SY2011-12, the project will provide professional development to teachers and principals in the 7 pilot LEAs to help them implement their teacher and principal evaluation system. In collaboration with MSDE and the Center Coordinator responsible for overall management of the regional development centers for executive officers, an outside contractor will develop the content of the professional development for executive officers. (2) Additional professional development will be provided beginning at the end of SY2011-12 to the remaining LEAs in the development of their systems, including information on how the systems can be used for promotion, transfer, and other purposes. (3) The project budget will be reduced by \$227,716 from \$1,203,448 to \$975,732. Maryland has indicated that it intends to reallocate these funds to offset some of the training and support costs LEAs will incur in their implementation of the new evaluation systems. Final approval of these training and support activities will be determined based on additional description and justification in future amendments.
E: Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools	Project Lead the Way/Gateway to Technology (#51/71)	Implement four in SY2010-11 and six in SY2011-12, rather than implementing Gateway to Technology curriculum in 10 low performing schools in SY2010-11 as originally proposed. The implementation shift is necessary because it took longer than expected to identify schools where the principal and faculty were ready to implement a STEM-focused curriculum. As a result, \$144,000 in the line item for "supplemental funding for participating LEAs" in SY2010-11 will be shifted to SY2011-12.

Specific project	Corrections to amendment approval letter dated April 8, 2011
Implement System to Support E-Learning for Intervention, Enhancement and Enrichment (#26/43)	Correct errors to Maryland's amendment request (on file with the Department) and the Department's April 8, 2011 amendment approval letter to reflect that the contractual budget of \$300,000 has been split evenly across two years, rather than \$500,000 across two years, as erroneously stated.
Professional Development for Executive Officers (#40/15)	Correct errors to Maryland's amendment request (on file with the Department) and the Department's April 8, 2011 amendment approval letter to reflect that the contractual budget of \$125,000 has been shifted from year 1 to year 2, rather than \$250,000 from year 1 to year 2, as erroneously stated.