



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

January 20, 2012

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 November 22 and December 8, 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 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 amendments outlined below:

- For the project area Great Teachers and Leaders, in the project "Educator Effectiveness Academies (#41/24)," during the summer of 2012, provide targeted professional development over the course of three days, rather than five days as was originally proposed. The State stated that educators surveyed after participating in the three-day Academy design used during summer 2011 reported it to be effective and, as a result, Maryland believes that the content as well as the goals of the summer 2012 Academies can be achieved within a condensed timeframe. As a result of this change, the overall project budget is reduced by \$1,359,186.
- In addition to the cost savings from the "Educator Effectiveness Academies (#41/24)" project described above, Maryland expended less than expected during the first year on the following projects: "Teacher Toolkit Portal (#23/55)," "IHE Teacher Preparation Workshops (#25/10)," "Building Leadership Capacity in Rural and Urban Schools (#31/13)," "Elementary STEM Certification (#35/26)," "Breakthrough Center (#44/41)," "Coordinated Student Services (#47/75)," and "Physical Activity (#49/63)." The total of \$1,859,523 in funds not used for these projects will be redirected to other Race to the Top projects.

- Of the \$1,859,523 explained above, redirect \$1,027,770 to the project “Office of Academic Reform and Innovation (#1/78),” to add five new positions for years 2 through 4 of the grant period within the Maryland State Department of Education

Office of Academic Reform and Innovation. These positions include two financial management positions, one project manager, one communications position, and one administrative assistant position. Maryland intends for these additional positions to address financial management, project oversight, and communications needs identified during the first year of implementation.

- An additional \$77,782 will be redirected to the “Teach for Maryland (#32/73)” project to support expenses for the summer institutes and consortium meetings associated with this project. Maryland will submit an amendment to propose a use for the remaining \$753,971 of the \$1,859,523 explained above.
- For the project area Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools, in the project “Breakthrough Center (#44/41),” use \$595,728 in funds unspent in year 1 due to late hiring of the 10.5 Professional Development Education Specialist positions to support the following: (1) Add an Educational Specialist for Leadership Development position for years 2 through 4 to expand professional development opportunities for school principals and leadership teams in Baltimore City and Prince George’s County schools; (2) Provide 200 school leaders with access to an online tool designed to assist them in managing the school improvement process; and (3) Conduct an assessment of the impact of Breakthrough Center services in years 2 through 4. Assessment activities did not occur in year 1 as originally planned because the State wished to align the Breakthrough Center evaluation with the overall Race to the Top program evaluation project, which experienced delays in year 1. Additionally, the State believes that extending the assessment from one to three years will better allow for ongoing assessment of Breakthrough Center services.
- For the project area Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools, in the project “Coordinated Student Services (#47/45),” incorporate additional professional development activities in years 2 through 4, using unspent year 1 funds due to a late project start. Maryland would like to offer site-based professional development for individual schools’ student support teams in addition to the group professional development for student support teams already included in this project.

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 Ashlee Davis, at 202-401-9501 or Ashlee.Davis@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

//s//

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

Cc: Bernard Sadusky
James V. Foran