



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Office of the Governor
Maryland State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

May 6, 2015

Dear Governor Hogan:

I am writing in response to Maryland's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant projects. Between April 7 and April 14, 2015, the State submitted documentation to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to support amendment requests 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 March 2013, 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 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:

- In the "Office of Academic Reform and Innovation" (Project 1/78), reduce the total project budget by \$755,892 due to lower than budgeted personnel costs as the State was able to accomplish its approved work with Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) staff supported through non-Race to the Top funds. As a result, Maryland will reallocate these unexpended funds to support other areas of the State's plan.¹
- In the "Implement an Assessment System" (Project 17/32), shift up to \$2,735,661 in unexpended funds identified from other projects to Year 5 to expand technology subgrants previously awarded to Participating and Involved Race to the Top LEAs. In Year 5, Maryland provided subgrants to local educational agencies (LEAs) to procure, enhance, or expand local assessment systems to house local and State-developed formative assessment resources. Maryland will provide LEAs with additional funds to expand subgrants already underway to

¹ During Maryland's budgetary review, the State identified Race to the Top project funds not yet spent or not on-track to be spent during Year 5. Maryland's Race to the Top leadership made determinations about the best use of these funds during Year 5, which in some cases resulted in shifting funds to other project budgets as described throughout this table.

further enhance local assessment systems and build a more comprehensive assessment system in the State.

- In “The Breakthrough Center” (Project 44/41), reduce the total project budget by \$558,244 to reflect actual expenditures. Funds remain primarily because contractual and personnel costs were lower than the State budgeted to complete activities in this project. Maryland will reallocate these unexpended funds to support other areas of the State’s plan.

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

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 ED expects 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. 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 do not hesitate to contact Jamila Smith of my staff at (202) 453-6360 or OSS.Maryland@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

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

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