



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

APRIL 8, 2015

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

Dear Governor Hogan:

I am writing in response to Maryland's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. On March 19, 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 ED reviews amendments containing requests to provide additional time for a grantee to accomplish the reform goals and deliverables to which it committed in its Race to the Top application and approved Scope of Work. To determine whether to approve this request, ED applied the conditions noted in the document and compared your request with the Race to the Top program Principles, which are also included in that document.

I am pleased to approve the all of the amendments listed in the enclosed table.

As described in an April 9, 2014, amendment approval letter, ED indicated that it generally approves Maryland's process to review local educational agency (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.

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If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact Jamila Smith at (202) 453-6360 or OSS.Maryland@ed.gov.

Thank you for your continued commitment to enhancing education for all of Maryland's students.

Sincerely,

/s/

Deborah S. Delisle
Assistant Secretary

Enclosure

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

Summary of Maryland Race to the Top Amendments

Grant project	Specific project	Description of change area affected
(A)(2)	Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift \$644,923 in unexpended Year 4 funds from other projects to Year 5 Contractual to pay for Evaluation (2/ 1) expenditures in Years 4 and 5 for approved evaluation activities. 1 Specifically, Maryland, in partnership with its third-party evaluator, is assessing the implementation of college- and career- ready standards across the State. The State's evaluator will continue to provide Maryland with an analysis of the results so that the State can provide training and support to LEAs.
(B)(2)	Formative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift \$3,371,838 of unexpended Year 4 project funds primarily from the Contractual cost category Assessment (3/2) to Year 5 to support the State's previously approved plans to develop formative assessment items and performance tasks for Maryland educators. The funds were not used in Year 4 due to a delay in signing a vendor contract during that year, which resulted in the State shifting elements of the project to Year 5.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition, reduce the State's total budget for this project by \$1,176,957 to support other areas of the State's plan. While the State budgeted funds for Years in 1-3 to complete the development of formative assessment items and performance tasks, Maryland faced significant challenges with solidifying a sustainable project plan until Year 4; as a result, there were limited expenditures for the project during those years.2 Additionally, costs for the online formative assessment professional development modules developed through this project were lower than anticipated.
(C)(3)	Expand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift \$1,054,610 in unexpended Year 4 funds to Year 5 to support the State's ongoing Instructional development of resources for its online repository, including student assessment courses in Toolkit (1517) Algebra I and English Grade 10. The State is shifting funds across years as a result of timeline delays due to a change in the State's vendor and contractual cost savings. Maryland originally planned to complete the development of its Algebra I and English Grade 10 student assessment courses in Year 4 and pilot the courses with LEAs in Year 5. The State will now complete the development and piloting of the courses in Year 5
(C)(3)	Develop Online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease the number of student enrichment and intervention modules Maryland will develop in Instructional Year 5. Originally, Maryland planned to develop 125 student modules; however, upon working Intervention with its contractor, the State determined that it would be able to cover the same content with 70.

¹ During Maryland's budgetary review, the State identified Race to the Top project funds not yet spent or not on-track LO be spent during Year 5. Maryland's Race Lo the Top leadership made determinations about the best use of these funds during Year 5, which in some cases resulted in shifting funds Lo other project budgets as described throughout this table. For additional information regarding Maryland's approved plans for the Formative Assessment project (3/2), see the June 12, 2014 approval letter: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/maryland-22.pdf>

	Modules (22/6)	modules. As a result, Maryland will reduce its overall project budget by \$80,475 and use those funds to support other areas of the State's plan.
(D)(2)	Develop and Implement an Educator Evaluation System (29/48)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Shift from Year 4 to Year 5 \$2,122,483 in unexpended funds for subgrants to LEAs because reimbursements for funds obligated during Year 4 will not be made until Year 5. ● In addition, shift \$426,783 in unexpended Year 4 funds from the State's "Professional Development for Executive Officers" project (40/15) to Year 5 Supplemental Funds for LEAs in the "Develop and Implement an Educator Evaluation System" (project 29/48) to execute the State's previously approved subgrants for LEAs. Maryland requests this budgetary shift to jointly process LEA subgrants awarded through both projects, thereby reducing burden on the State.
(D)(3)	Compensation for Teachers and Principals in the Lowest 5 Percent Schools (33/50)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Reduce the State's total project budget by \$1,167,880 because participating LEAs did not disperse as many incentives as anticipated during Year 4. Maryland reports that LEA did not expend the amount budgeted due primarily to fewer teachers and leaders meeting eligibility criteria than expected. The State will use the unexpended funds to support other areas of its plan.
(D)(S)	Educator Effectiveness Academies (41/ 24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shift a total of \$1,480,000 in unexpended Years 1-4 project funds (\$874,687) and in unexpended funds from other projects (\$605,313) to Year 5 to expand the State's previously approved College- and Career-Ready Conferences work. In summer 2015, Maryland will implement a face-to-face professional development convening available to educators in all LEAs that will provide differentiated support in topics identified through feedback from the field (e.g., training on the State's Learning Management System and transitioning to college- and career-ready standards and new State assessments).
(D)(5)	Develop Online PD on Educator Instructional Improvement Content (43/21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shift \$342,854 in unexpended project funds from Year 4 to Year 5; funds were not expended in Year 4 because Maryland signed its vendor contract later than anticipated, which resulted in the State needing to shift additional elements of its project plan to Year 5. Maryland will use the funds to support previously approved development and release of nine remaining educator online professional development modules. o In addition, reduce the overall project budget by \$746,950 to reflect actual expenditures. The State will use the unexpended funds to support other approved areas of the State's plan.