



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

May 24, 2013

The Honorable Deval Patrick  
Office of the Governor  
State House, Room 360  
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Dear Governor Patrick:

I am writing in response to Massachusetts' request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. Between February 26, 2013 and May 21, 2013, the State submitted documentation to and held conversations with the U.S. Department of Education (Department) to support an amendment request to its approved Race to the Top plan and budget. 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. 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.

The following amendment is approved:

In Federal Project 9: Sub-project D3.D: Strengthen climate, conditions and school culture, adjust approach of convening a single diversity summit. Massachusetts initially planned to convene a diversity summit in the fall of 2010 to focus on the recruitment and retention of a diverse and culturally proficient educator workforce. The results of the summit were to produce specific actionable recommendations to guide State, LEA, and higher education efforts to inform the State's equity plan and to strengthen the diversity and cultural proficiency of Massachusetts' educators. The State will revise this approach to convene a task force comprised of internal and external stakeholders, including experts in diversity and/or education.

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In Year 3, the task force will review the current initiatives and work underway in Massachusetts' LEAs and the data regarding the State's workforce diversity and disproportionate use of out of school suspensions for African American and Hispanic students. The task force will also identify best practices to increase diversity throughout the educator career continuum and decrease the proportionality gap in the state average of the number of out of school suspensions for Hispanic and African American males as compared to White students. In Year 4, the task force information will be used to make recommendations for effective strategies, practices, and opportunities that support efforts for building a more diverse and culturally proficient workforce and for reducing the disproportionate use of out of school suspensions for African American and Hispanic students to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) and LEAs. Additionally, ESE will develop and implement a communication plan to ensure that the task force recommendations are effectively messaged to LEAs, professional organizations, and the general public. The Department looks forward to hearing how the recommendations and resources produced by the Diversity Task Force impact Massachusetts' educator workforce and student outcomes.

The following amendment is approved with the condition outlined below:

In Federal Project 9: Sub-project B3.A4: Develop curriculum embedded performance assessments (CEPAs); adjust the approach for CEPA development. Currently, the State is working to include in each model curriculum unit (MCU) a CEPA, aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and deeply embedded in each MCU's lesson plan. CEPAs are designed to measure multiple standards simultaneously, including standards that have traditionally been difficult to measure in an on-demand test, and to elicit complex student demonstrations or applications of knowledge and skills. In Year 3, the State initiated work to create additional large-scale CEPAs in the following subject areas: 1) English language arts (ELA), 2) Mathematics, 3) science and technology/engineering and 4) history and social sciences. These assessments are not connected to MCUs but are aligned to the CCSS and the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. To reduce confusion and effectively communicate to the field information regarding these two groups of CEPAs, the State will re-brand the large-scale CEPAs as Massachusetts Performance Assessments of Knowledge and Skills (MPAKS). In year 4, the State will continue to develop and perform small tryouts of MPAKS in a few classrooms. After receiving and considering feedback from the tryouts, the State will begin to pilot several MPAKS in the spring 2014 to determine how they can be used by educators and their possible use in conjunction with the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Additionally, Massachusetts will shift \$788,258 of contractual funds in sub-project B3.A4 from Year 2 to Years 3 and 4. The budget shift is due a delay in awarding the contract to support this work.

The amendment approval is conditioned upon the State not using Race to the Top grant funds to design, develop or pilot MPAKS for eventual summative purposes in grades and subjects that are part of the State's ESEA accountability plan. As noted in the Notice Inviting Application (NIA) and the Notice of Final Priorities (NFP) under "Statewide Summative Assessments", no funds awarded under the Race to the Top competition

may be used to pay for costs related to statewide summative assessments (e.g., the State assessments required under the ESEA). Based on these requirements, Race to the Top funds may not be used to develop or pilot MPAKS in the following subject areas and grades:

- ELA and Mathematics grades 3 through 8 and 10
- Science and technology/engineering grades 5, 8 and 10

If Race to the Top funds have been or are used in the development of MPAKS, the State must demonstrate how MPAKS developed for subject areas and grades where MCAS are administered are paid for through State or other funds.

It is our understanding that these amendments 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 this letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of the amendment.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact Massachusetts' Race to the Top Program Officer, Cindy Savage, at 202-453-5998 or [cindy.savage@ed.gov](mailto:cindy.savage@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: Commissioner Mitchell Chester  
Carrie Conaway  
Helene Bettencourt  
Saeyun Lee