



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

September 17, 2013

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

Dear Governor Patrick:

I am writing in response to Massachusetts' request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project, including revisions to the project period to implement a portion of its plan. Between August 13 and August 29, 2013, the State submitted documentation to and held conversations with the U.S. Department of Education (Department) to support amendment requests to its approved Race to the Top plan. As you are aware, the Department 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, the Department 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 and approved or denied. To determine whether approval could be granted, the Department 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, including an extension to the time period for implementation of one project, as described below.

In order to consider amendment requests with no cost extensions, the Department indicated that States must address the process the State will use to review local educational agency (LEA) subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after the current project period. Through conversations with Massachusetts and documentation submitted as part of these amendment requests, we understand that the State will review proposals from participating LEAs to extend the project period to complete Race

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to the Top activities on a case-by-case basis in spring 2014, at the same time that LEAs will be submitting amendments to the State to adjust their Race to the Top budgets for fiscal year (FY) 2014. It is the Department's understanding that Massachusetts will support LEAs to continue work in their existing approved local Scopes of Work during the no cost extension period. Additionally it is the Department's understanding that the State may consider LEA requests to participate in approved statewide Race to the Top initiatives, such as the Edwin Teaching and Learning system, in Year 5. The Department generally approves the State's process as described in Appendix 1.

Prior to June 30, 2014, the Department expects the State to submit a record of each participating LEA project approved by the State for a no cost extension and the total funding for LEAs' Year 5 Scopes of Work.

In order to provide support for LEAs to implement Race to the Top activities funded by LEA subgrants and to continue LEA subgrant monitoring processes during the no cost extension period, Massachusetts is approved to transfer \$653,501 in unexpended Year 3 funds and Year 4 funds available due to anticipated cost savings to Year 5 in Federal project 1, Sub-project A2.A (Project Management). These funds will support personnel costs associated with seven full-time equivalent positions from September 23, 2014 to June 30, 2015.

Additionally, to allow program evaluation of Race to the Top initiatives to continue during the no cost extension period, Massachusetts is approved to transfer \$214,172 in unexpended Year 3 funds and Year 4 funds available due to anticipated cost savings to Year 5 in Federal project 1, Sub-project A2.A (Project Management). These funds will allow the State to continue data collection and evaluation of key initiatives for an additional nine months.

It is our understanding that these amendments and no cost extensions will not result in a change to your State's performance measures and outcomes, nor will they substantially change the scope and objectives of the work. Please note that we are expecting grantees 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. The State must request and receive approval to move forward with no cost extensions for any additional projects. 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, 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: Commissioner Mitchell Chester
Carrie Conaway
Helene Bettencourt
Saeyun Lee

Appendix 1: Process the State will use to review LEA subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after the current project period, as described by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

LEAs will need to apply to ESE for approval to spend their remaining funds during the no cost extension period, but, if approved, LEAs will be granted an additional nine months to support program activities, from September 24, 2014 to June 30, 2015.

LEAs should only seek approval for a no cost extension if they need additional time to meet their requirements. ESE is still encouraging districts to complete program activities and spend down their remaining funds by the original end date, September 23, 2014.

ESE staff will review no cost extension proposals to ensure that they comply with program guidelines and requirements and align with the state's SOW and objectives. The deadline for LEAs to submit their no cost extension plans will be April 1, 2014. ESE will review and evaluate these plans on a rolling basis and will respond to all applicants by no later than May 1.

When reviewing LEAs no cost extension plans, ESE will look at the following criteria to determine each LEA's likelihood of success:

1. Has the LEA fulfilled its MOU requirements?
2. Has the LEA drawn down and expended funds in a timely and effective manner during the first four years?
3. Has the LEA made substantial progress implementing its RTTT plan as indicated in its performance measure reports?
4. Has the district met all of its reporting requirements, including ARRA 1512 reporting and state mandated final expenditure reporting?
5. Has the LEA made a good argument for why it needs additional time to accomplish its goals?
6. *Has the LEA submitted a list of the District Determined Measures (DDMs) to be piloted during the 2013-14 school year?*
7. *Has the LEA submitted a their final plans for implementing statewide (MCAS) growth measures and DDMs for the purpose of collecting Year 1 Student Impact Rating data during the 2014-15 school year?*

The list of district-facing RTTT projects will remain largely unchanged, only the HR Pilot and TELL Mass projects will be phased-out, though ESE will ask LEAs to focus on the core projects during the no cost extension period, including educator evaluation, curriculum alignment, SEI endorsement training, Edwin, and district and school turnaround efforts. We will review each LEAs plan in light of any requirements that the district still needs to fulfill based on the performance measure reports and other evidence.