



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

August 6, 2014

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 January 24, 2014, and July 28, 2014, 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. 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 several sub-projects, as described below.

- In Federal Project 8, Sub-project D2.A2 (Evaluation framework and implementation – grants): Shift a total of \$273,796 from Year 3 contractual within this project (\$185,056) and Years 3 and 4 in Sub-project D3.H (Online mentoring program) (\$88,740) to Year 4 supplemental funding for participating local

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The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

educational agencies (LEAs). The State has demonstrated that it has met its commitments in these projects. In Year 4, these funds supported local grants to pilot promising human resource practices and to pilot technology applications for implementing evaluation systems.

- In Federal Project 7, Sub-project C3.A (Educator training on data use): Shift \$684,751 to Year 5 to continue to support personnel and fringe for District and School Assistance Center (DSAC) data specialists through June 30, 2015. To date, DSAC data specialists have served 56 Level 3 and 4 LEAs with training and supports on effective data use. Preliminary evaluation findings indicate that this work supported changes in data culture at the LEA and classroom levels. These funds are available from Year 3 and 4 savings in this and other Sub-project budgets where the State has demonstrated that it met its commitments: \$100,000 from Sub-project C2.B (School Interoperability Framework); \$390,004 from Sub-project B3.C1 (Pre-Advanced Placement grants); and, \$178,996 from Sub-project B3.A3 (Interim and formative assessment system). In addition, shift \$15,751 from within Sub-project C3.A to support this purpose in Year 5. Additional shifts in this sub-project budget are reflected in the conditional approvals below.

The following amendments are approved with the conditions that follow each.

- In Federal Project 7, Sub-project C3.A (Educator training on data use): Shift \$550,000 from Years 3 and 4 contractual to Year 5 contractual through June 30, 2015. These funds are available because the State experienced delays due to vendor challenges in developing high-quality data use professional development for educators. Rather than develop and disseminate complete courses to educators, the State will contract with a vendor to develop and deploy a series of system-embedded tools, resources and modules that will support educator use of reports and data currently available in the State's data systems, such as Edwin Analytics.

Approval of this amendment is conditioned on the State providing the following to the Department:

1. By October 30, 2014, a draft plan of expected deliverables and a timeline for implementation.
 2. By December 1, 2014, the final plan, including a description of deliverables, a timeline for implementation, and dissemination of the system-embedded tools and resources to LEAs.
- In Federal Project 7, Sub-project C3.A (Educator training on data use): Shift \$1,159,415 from Year 4 contractual into this sub-project budget for Year 5. In addition to the \$684,751 for DSAC data specialists and \$550,000 for system-embedded resources described above, the State intends to retain \$1,159,415 in this Sub-project budget to support LEA work around using data to drive decision-making through June 30, 2015.

Approval of the Year 5 Sub-project C3.A (Educator training on data use) total budget of \$2,394,166 is conditioned on the State providing to the Department a plan for the remaining \$1,159,415 by September 1, 2014.

The following amendments are approved because they are necessary for the State to meet some of the commitments outlined in its approved plan within the no-cost extension period. The State will continue to work with the Department to ensure that Massachusetts' educator evaluation system meets Principle 3 requirements under Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility.

- In Federal Project 8, Sub-project D2.A (Educator effectiveness staff and operations): Shift \$505,421 from Years 3 and 4 to Year 5 through June 30, 2015, which includes \$414,384 from this Sub-project budget and \$91,037 from Sub-project D3.A (Equitable distribution of teachers) and Sub-project D3.H (Online mentoring program). Funds are available from within this budget due to lower than anticipated spending on personnel. Funds are available from Sub-projects D3.A and D3.H due to contractual costs being lower than expected. In Year 5 these funds will support personnel costs to support implementation of the State educator evaluation systems, including development and refinement of training materials and providing technical assistance to LEAs. In addition, in Year 5 the State will contract with a vendor to assist the State in developing ways for LEAs to recognize and reward exemplary teachers. This vendor will also partner with and learn from LEAs that are implementing career ladder initiatives and develop a policy brief with lessons learned to share with other LEAs.
- In Federal Project 8, Sub-project D2.A1 (Evaluation framework and implementation): Shift \$2,486,820 from Year 3 to Years 4 and 5 through June 30, 2015, which includes \$2,467,650 from this Sub-project budget and \$19,170 in contractual savings from Sub-project D3.H. These funds are available from within the Sub-project D2.A1 budget because fewer LEAs than expected used the State's vendors to deliver educator evaluation system trainings than expected and due to lower than expected sub-grant costs to support local evaluation system implementation. In Years 4 and 5 these funds will support educator evaluation system trainings for LEAs, technical assistance on District-Determined Measures (DDMs) and implementation of student and staff surveys, Professional Practice Innovation grants,¹ and an educator evaluation spring convening.
- In Federal Project 8, Sub-project D2.A1-IT (Evaluation Framework and implementation – Program IT): Shift \$30,900 from Year 3 to Years 4 and 5 to continue to support the information technology infrastructure needed to collect

¹ Professional Practice Innovation grants support local efforts to integrate implementation of educator evaluation systems and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, including, for example, stipends for educators, curriculum materials and contracts for external partners.

educator evaluation information from LEAs through the Educator Personnel Information Management System through June 30, 2015. In addition, these funds will support the development of educator evaluation reports for LEA access through Edwin Analytics. These funds are available from the lower than expected contractual costs and delays in activities described above.

As described in a September 17, 2013, amendment approval letter, the Department indicated that it generally approves the State's process to review LEA subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after September 23, 2014.

It is our understanding that this amendment and no-cost extension 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 we are expecting 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. 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, Monika Bandyopadhyay, at 202-260-2531 or monika.bandyopadhyay@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

//s//

Patrick Rooney
Acting Director, Policy and Program Implementation
Implementation and Support Unit

cc: Commissioner Mitchell Chester
Carrie Conaway
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