



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

July 2, 2012

The Honorable Chris Christie  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Christie:

I am writing in response to New Jersey's request to amend its approved Race to the Top Grant project. Between May 31 and June 5, 2012, the State submitted amendment requests and supporting documentation to the U.S. Department of Education (Department). As you are aware, the Department has the authority to approve amendment requests 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 published the "Grant Amendment Submission Process" 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.

I approve the amendments detailed in the attached table. In general, these amendments are a result of timeline shifts. In its scope of work, the State adjusted certain project timelines outlined in its approved plan to more accurately reflect the sequence of events and better accommodate procurement requests as well as local education agencies and teachers as they implement activities. Some timeline shifts were also necessary to account for late hiring of grant-funded positions. Two of the timeline shifts described in the attached table have implications for the approved budget. Due to late hiring and delayed procurement, the State will shift Year 1 Personnel and Contractual funds to Years 2 and 3.

It is our understanding that these amendments will not result in a change in your State's performance measures and outcomes. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of the amendments.

[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202-6200

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

I am confident in New Jersey's efforts to implement bold, comprehensive reforms. If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact New Jersey's Race to the Top Program Officer, Renee Faulkner, at 202-205-4012 or [Renee.Faulkner@ed.gov](mailto:Renee.Faulkner@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: Acting Commissioner Chris Cerf  
Andy Smarick  
Evan Linhardt  
Juliet Squire

A description of New Jersey's Proposed Amendments by Sub-Criteria and Project

Assurance Area	Project	Description of Change
(B)(3)	Transition to CCSS and STEM	Shift scaffolding of Model Curriculum for English language learners and special education students from May 2012 to August 2012 to accommodate the completion of necessary prerequisite work such as developing student learning objectives, and allowing sufficient time to convene writing teams. The timeline for teachers' access to the Model Curriculum resources remains the same.
(B)(3)	Transition to CCSS and STEM	Shift the development of formative assessments from May 2012 to November 2012. Procurement regulations for this scope of work require an RFP which takes minimum of 10 months. This process began in April 2012. In the interim educator cadres from across the state led by the NJ DOE will begin the process of developing assessment items so that the work will be completed by November of 2012.
(C)(3)	Instructional Improvement System	Shift the timeline for uploading content into the IIS from Spring 2013 to October 2013. The original timeline erroneously proposed loading content into the IIS <i>prior</i> to constructing the IIS. This new timeline takes into account the logical sequencing of activities.
(D)(2)	Educator Effectiveness	Shift the timeline for hiring the two-year educator evaluation implementation manager and contracting with the principal evaluation manager from January 2012 to September 2012. To accommodate this new timeline, shift \$47,500 in Personnel and \$70,000 in Contractual funds for this project from Year 1 to Years 2 and 3. The implementation managers will be hired by individuals in leadership positions that are not yet filled. The new timeline still allows for timely implementation of phase 2 of the teacher evaluation pilot and phase 1 of the principal evaluation pilot, both of which will launch in September 2012.
(D)(2)	Educator Effectiveness	Shift the timeline for contracting with a vendor to evaluate the educator evaluation pilots from June 2012 to August 2012. It has taken the State longer than expected to procure a qualified vendor for this project. The adjusted timeline provides that the vendor will be procured by the time the pilots are launched. The delay will require that the contracts extend into year 3, therefore, shift \$33,000 of unspent Year 1 Contractual funds shift to Year 3.
STEM, (B)(3)	STEM	Shift the timeline for evaluating STEM instructional materials from February 2012 to July 2012. This timeline reflects the logical sequencing of activities, as content will not be developed until June 2012.