



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

March 25, 2014

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

I am writing in response to New York's 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 March 3, 2014, and March 20, 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 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 two projects and related activities, as described below.

- In the "B1/I1: Early Learning Tools for Parents/Caregivers," shift funds from Years 2 and 3 to Years 4 and 5 to extend the time to provide technical assistance to early learning programs and develop resources to inform parents and caregivers on early learning options. After initial delays finalizing the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), the State experienced additional technical delays related to the development and rollout

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of the online QUALITYStarsNY system. In order to provide additional time for the State to facilitate observations and provide technical assistance and resources to support quality improvement in early childhood programs around the highest need schools in the State, the State is approved for a no-cost extension for up to \$4,815,277 to June 30, 2015. Given initial ratings were not provided until December 2013, the State believes the extended timeline better enables programs to incorporate improvement activities before receiving an active rating in early 2015. Additionally, the State plans to utilize the additional time to disseminate prekindergarten to grade two assessment guidance and to expand resources available to families to support early learning, including for parents of students with disabilities or who are English learners.ⁱ

- In the “E6: Virtual Learning Initiatives” project, shift funds from Years 2 and 3 to Years 4 and 5 to extend and expand the scope of the Virtual Advancement Placement (VAP) grant program and external evaluation and revise the approach to the VAP repository.
 - After initial delays with procurement and contracting, the State made grants to in January 2013 to 17 local educational agencies (LEAs) and consortia of LEAs to implement strategies to develop or adapt Advanced Placement (AP) courses and provide professional development to teachers and principals to improve low-income students’ access to AP courses. Additionally, the State established an MOA to monitor, collect, and analyze quantitative and qualitative data on VAP grantee program implementation, including data on students and teachers served and an evaluation of program impact. The State initially planned to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to support development of a repository to gather, inventory, and make VAP content available statewide; however, it has since determined that it can provide this functionality more efficiently and with greater sustainability through New York State Education Department web pages.
 - The State will shift \$3 million of the funds budgeted for the statewide repository to run a second VAP grant competition. According to the State, this additional opportunity will allow more LEAs to provide access to AP courses for students and training opportunities for educators.
 - In order to provide additional time for the first and additional VAP grantees to implement projects and for associated continuation of the program monitoring and evaluation MOA, the State is approved for a no-cost extension for up to \$20,298,624 to June 30, 2015. ⁱⁱ

As described in a May 29, 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. 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 approved for LEAs’ Year 5 Scopes of Work.

It is our understanding that these amendments and no-cost extensions 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 amendments. The State's Scope of Work will also be updated to reflect approved extensions.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact New York's Race to the Top Program Officer, Jessie Harteis, at 202-453-6651 or Jessie.Harteis@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

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

cc: Dr. John B. King, Jr., Commissioner of Education
Ken Slentz, Deputy Commissioner, Office of P-12 Education
Don Juron, Chief Financial Officer, New York State Education Department
John Delaney, Director of Operations, Office of P-12 Education
Karen Daugherty, Project Manager, Performance Management Office

ⁱ See <http://qualitystarsny.org/parents-home.php>.

ⁱⁱ Based on its revised approach to the repository and revised estimates for program monitoring and evaluation, it is the Department's understanding that the State will submit additional amendment(s) to request the use of \$1,961,000 from the "E6: Virtual Learning Initiatives" project budget.