



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

April 18, 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 January 23, 2014, and April 17, 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 amendment, including an extension to the time period for implementation of one project and related activities, as described below.

- In the "B3: Grade 6-8 Assessment for Teacher/School Leader Evaluation" project, shift \$16,715,000ⁱ Years 3 and 4 to Years 4 and 5 to support a competitive grant opportunity, Teaching is the Core (TITC), to support local educational agencies (LEAs) in their efforts to improve the quality of existing educational assessments and reduce the number of assessments that do not contribute to teaching and learning, with an extended project

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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.

period to June 30, 2015. The State initially proposed to develop summative assessments for grades 6 – 8 in social studies and grades 6 and 7 in science. Based on the timing associated with the potential adoption of the Next Generation Science standards (NGSS) and K-12 social studies framework, the State is now using TITC grants to meet the commitments of this project. The State will award TITC funds to individual or consortiums of LEAs to review all existing local assessments and practices and develop an action plan to modify, eliminate, or replace assessments based on the conclusions of its local review. Each TITC grantee will be expected to publicly post its plan, provide professional development to educators focusing on recognizing and developing high-quality assessments, and design training to increase parents' assessment literacy. According to the State, this process will enable LEAs to reduce the burden of unnecessary assessments and build internal capacity to develop high-quality assessments. Furthermore, based on feedback from its Network Teams, the State believes that engaging LEAs and their educators in the process of analyzing all current assessment will have a more direct impact on aligning day-to-day instruction with college- and career-ready expectations than the originally planned summative assessment forms for social studies and science.

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 Of these funds, \$6,715,000 are unexpended funds approved in a previous amendment letter dated February 11, 2013.