



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

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

April 29, 2015

Dear Governor Cuomo:

This letter serves as a response to New York's request to amend its approved Race to the Top (RTT) grant project, including revisions to the project period, to implement a portion of its plan. Between April 8, 2015, and April 15, 2015, the State submitted documentation to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to support amendment requests to its approved Race to the Top plan. ED 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, ED issued *Amendment Requests with No-cost Extension Guidance and Principles*, indicating the process by which ED reviews amendments containing requests to provide additional time for a grantee to accomplish the reform goals and deliverables to which it committed to in its RTT application and approved Scope of Work. To determine whether or not ED could grant approval, ED 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 following amendments, as described below.

- Shift a total of \$15,629,784 in unallocated funds from Years 4 and 5 of multiple RTT projects to expand work underway in Year 5 for sub-criteria (C)(3): "Using Data to Improve Instruction," project (C)(1): "Education Data Portal." Funds are available due to lower-than-expected expenditures in the contractual cost category needed to complete grant activities. According to the State, projects where unallocated funds were identified have completed the planned scope and objectives successfully or were allocated more funds than necessary and expect to be completed or fulfill objectives with a revised budget.^{1,2}
 - Use \$14,500,000 of the total unallocated funds discussed above based on actual Year 4 and Year 5 costs to expand work underway in Year 5 in project (C)(1): "Education Data Portal."

¹ The total of \$15,629,784 is derived from actual expenditures in the following projects: (B)(1): "Development and Evaluation of P-12 Curriculum Modules (includes ELA & Literacy and Math P-12 Curriculum Modules)," "Common Core Institute Fellows," and "Curriculum Maps and Modules for Native Language Arts Classes"; (C)(1): "NYEngage Data Portal"; (D)(3): "Clinically Rich Teacher Preparation Pilot Programs"; (D)(4): "Higher Education Faculty Development Programs (includes Certification Assessment Assistance Fund); and (E)(6): "Virtual Learning Initiatives."

² In the case of one project, "Curriculum Maps and Modules for Native Language Arts Classes," New York will complete the work through State funds.

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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.

Specifically, the State will use these funds to provide its local educational agencies (LEAs) with increased access to technology to support the goal of improved teaching and learning through infusion of technology in classrooms and schools. The New York State Education Department (NYSED) indicated that it plans to coordinate with Regional Information Centers (RICs) on purchasing and ensuring investments in technology infrastructure and devices aligned with local priorities for using technology to support teaching and learning.³ After review and approval by the State, LEAs will have through August 14, 2015, to obligate funds.

- Use \$1,129,784 of the total unallocated funds discussed above based on actual Year 4 and Year 5 costs to expand work underway in Year 5 in project (C)(1): “Education Data Portal,” and extend the time period for implementation through August 14, 2015. Specifically, the State will use these funds to upgrade regional technology infrastructure and adding additional hardware and software resources to support the security and privacy of student data, while increasing the bandwidth available to their component school districts. According to the State, this additional investment will enhance and help sustain the capacity of the RICs to continue to support LEAs and schools to use data to improve instruction.

As described in a May 29, 2013, amendment approval letter and, subsequently, in an April 25, 2014, amendment approval letter, ED indicated that it generally approves New York’s process to review LEA subgrant requests to obligate and liquidate funds after September 23, 2014. New York provided a record of each participating LEA approved by the State for a no-cost extension and the total funding approved for LEAs’ Year 5 Scopes of Work.

It is ED’s understanding that these amendments 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 expect 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 ED’s website as a record of the amendments.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please contact Victoria Hammer at (202) 260-1438 or OSS.NewYork@ed.gov. Thank you for your continued commitment to enhancing education for all of New York’s students.

Sincerely,

/s/

Monique Chism
Director
Office of State Support

cc: Elizabeth Berlin, Acting Commissioner of Education

³ As part of the 2014-15 enacted budget, New York authorized \$2 billion through the Smart School Bond Act to support improved educational technology and infrastructure through Learning Technology Grants aimed at improving learning and opportunity for students throughout the State.

Ken Wagner, Deputy Commissioner of Education

Cosimo Tangorra, Jr., 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