



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

July 20, 2011

The Honorable Beverly Perdue
Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

Dear Governor Perdue:

I am writing in response to North Carolina's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. Between May 18 and June 6, 2011, the State submitted documentation related to an amendment request to the U.S. Department of Education (Department). As you are aware, the Department has the authority to approve amendments to your plan and budget, provided that such a change does not alter the scope or objectives of the approved proposal. On January 6, 2011, the Department sent a letter and "Grant Amendment Submission Process" document to Governors of grantee States 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.

Beginning in school year (SY) 2011-12, North Carolina expanded its teacher and principal evaluation processes to explicitly measure student growth. To implement this new element, the State's Race to the Top plan includes two stages:

- Stage one: In SY 2011-12, local educational agencies (LEAs) have discretion to determine documentation to use for student growth data from a broad list of eligible sources.¹
- Stage two: Prior to SY 2012-13, the State will adopt a uniform set of acceptable measures to be used by all LEAs.

Based in part from feedback from its participating LEAs about the expertise and resources necessary to design valid and reliable measures for the dozens of non-tested sets of content standards in North

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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.

Carolina's Standard Course of Study, the State requested to revise its plan for the first stage of implementation. It is the State's belief that it is a better use of resources to have LEAs implement measures for these areas in SY 2012-13 when they become available in a statewide approved set.

I am pleased to approve an amendment to permit LEAs to use school-level growth data as one of its multiple measure of the effectiveness of teachers in non-tested subjects and grades in SY 2011-12.

North Carolina's plan for tested grades and subjects in 2011-12 is unchanged; LEAs will be expected to use two or more examples of eligible student growth data.² LEAs already piloting new measures for assessing student growth will be encouraged to continue this work in 2011-12 and will help inform the State's design of standardized growth measures for all subjects. Additionally, through ongoing conversations with North Carolina, the Department understands that the State has a technical assistance committee in place that includes discussions about teacher and leader effectiveness as part of its quarterly agenda.

The State's budget for (D)(2) projects is not impacted by this amendment.

It is our understanding that this amendment will not result in a change in your State's performance measures and outcomes, nor will they substantially change the scope of work. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of the amendment.

I am confident that North Carolina will continue its bold, comprehensive reform efforts. If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact North Carolina's Race to the Top Program Officer, Jessie Levin, at 202-453-6651 or Jessie.Levin@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: Dr. June Atkinson
Dr. William Harrison
Adam Levinson

¹ e.g., Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (for LEP); Individual Education Plan goals (special needs); local pre-/post tests; Student Learning Objectives

² e.g., ABC growth measures (scale scores and/or Lexile/Quantile scores which employ a pre- and post- test method for assessing growth), Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS) results, or Career Technical education Assessment System results