



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

August 9, 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 June 10, 2011, and August 1, 2011, the State submitted 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.

I am pleased to approve the following amendment:

In the "Effective Teachers via Virtual and Blended Courses" project, adjust the approach to reflect best practices from the State's existing virtual program and lessons learned from other efforts in the State serving high-needs students. A total of six science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) related courses will now be developed and taught over the grant period in three pilot local educational agencies (LEAs).

In its application, North Carolina proposed to implement two virtual courses to 150 students each year; now, the State plans to pilot two new courses each year, offer additional sections of courses introduced in the prior year, and serve approximately 1,000 more students by the end of the grant than initially planned. Additionally, the State has clarified its implementation approach to include sections of each course taught with and without mobile devices. North Carolina believes this refined implementation strategy will allow the State to evaluate options for spreading and sustaining this curriculum statewide.

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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.*

This revised program will now begin in year two with the first courses to be delivered beginning in January 2012. The total budget amount for the project has not changed; however, the budget of \$6,456,023 will be used across three years instead of four years with a revised approach. The State's initial budget included more than \$4.75 million for teachers hired as full-time, time limited positions at the State Educational Agency (SEA) and related personnel costs. The State now plans to contract for teaching positions consistent with the State's Virtual Public School funding structure and to have individuals in those positions work alongside district-funded classroom teachers.<sup>i</sup>

This revised approach shifts funds to support a variety of contracted roles as well as two State-level positions to provide expertise for course design, ongoing technical assistance for teachers and students during delivery, and overall coordination across other State initiatives. North Carolina believes this revised staffing strategy provides a more comprehensive approach and enables the State to reach more high-needs students during the grant period than under the original proposal.

Additionally, equipment costs have been updated to reflect a greater number of students served each year. The Department understands that the State will apply existing policies and procedures around State equipment to this project and will also enter into a user agreement with each pilot LEA to establish terms of use.

It is our understanding that the amendments 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](mailto:Jessie.Levin@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

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

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

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<sup>i</sup> The State plans to contract for teachers based on number of courses delivered each semester. Six lead teacher roles will be contracted in grant years two and three, and eight will be funded in year four to work alongside five full-time district funded teachers in each of the three pilot districts.