



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY SECRETARY

June 24, 2011

The Honorable John R. Kasich  
Office of the Governor  
Riffe Center, 30th Floor  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, OH 43215-6108

Dear Governor Kasich:

I am writing in response to Ohio's request to amend its approved Race to the Top grant project. On June 7, 2011, the state submitted several amendment requests 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 changes do 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 amendments that align Ohio's project descriptions to the related project budget allocations by redistributing the funds across grant years and activities:

- For section C(2), Ohio's approved plan includes two professional development activities related to the teacher-level Value-Added reports. These activities are slated to be initiated and developed in year 1, accelerated implementation in year 2 when the reports are released, and ongoing implementation throughout the life of the grant. The related budget allocations distribute the funding across the grant years in a way that does not align with this implementation schedule. This amendment aligns the project description and project budget by redistributing the funding for this activity across the four year grant period. The "Expand Value-Added Statewide" project activities, total project budget, related performance measures, and implementation timelines will remain unchanged.

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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.*

- For section E(2), Ohio's plan includes competitive funds for districts to implement innovative models to bolster the state's plan to dramatically increase the quality of education in the state's 35 persistently lowest-achieving schools. These models will not replace turnaround initiatives required or already in place at the district, such as School Improvement Grant activities, but rather will supplement these efforts. Ohio committed to providing funding to schools to select one of the following innovative program models: the New Tech Model, International Studies Schools Network, Early College High Schools, and "other" proven models. The corresponding budget table, however, inadvertently left off the fourth "other proven model" option. In addition, the budget narrative explains the innovative schools will not begin until year 2 yet the budget table oversight provides funding for year 1. This amendment aligns the project description and project budget by redistributing year 1 funding for three of the budgeted models (\$3,373,500 in total) to fund the fourth "other proven model" program option. The total "Turn Around Ohio's Lowest-Achieving Schools" project budget, related performance measures, and implementation timelines will remain unchanged.
- For section E(2), Ohio's budget includes four years of funding for Learning Zones, which will act as laboratories to further the learning of educators in new and existing innovative schools through site visits, meetings, and other professional development. The project description explains the Learning Zones will not begin until year 2 yet the related budget table provides funding for year 1. Additionally, Ohio recently discovered the original approved funding for the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program is not sufficient to implement the program with fidelity. This amendment aligns the Learning Zone project description with its project budget and supplements the AVID funding by reallocating the year 1 allocation for Learning Zones, a cost savings of \$625,000 (\$12,500 for each of 50 Learning Zones), to the AVID budget. This amendment would result in a change to the total amount budgeted for each of these two activities, but the total "Turn Around Ohio's Lowest-Achieving Schools" project budget, related performance measures, and implementation timelines will remain unchanged.

It is our understanding that the amendment will not substantially change the State's scope of work. Further, it is our understanding that the State believes that, if the amendment were to affect its performance measures and outcomes in this assurance area, the addition of another model would most likely result in improved performance. The Department will review Ohio's progress to evaluate the effect of the amendment on the State's performance measures and outcomes. Please note that this letter will be posted on the Department's website as a record of the amendment.

If you need any assistance or have any questions regarding Race to the Top, please do not hesitate to contact Ohio's Race to the Top Program Officer, Rebecca Zazove, at (202) 260-1425 or [rebecca.zazove@ed.gov](mailto:rebecca.zazove@ed.gov).

Sincerely,

//s//

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

cc: State Interim Superintendent of Public Instruction, Stan Heffner  
Ohio's Race to the Top lead, Michael Sawyers